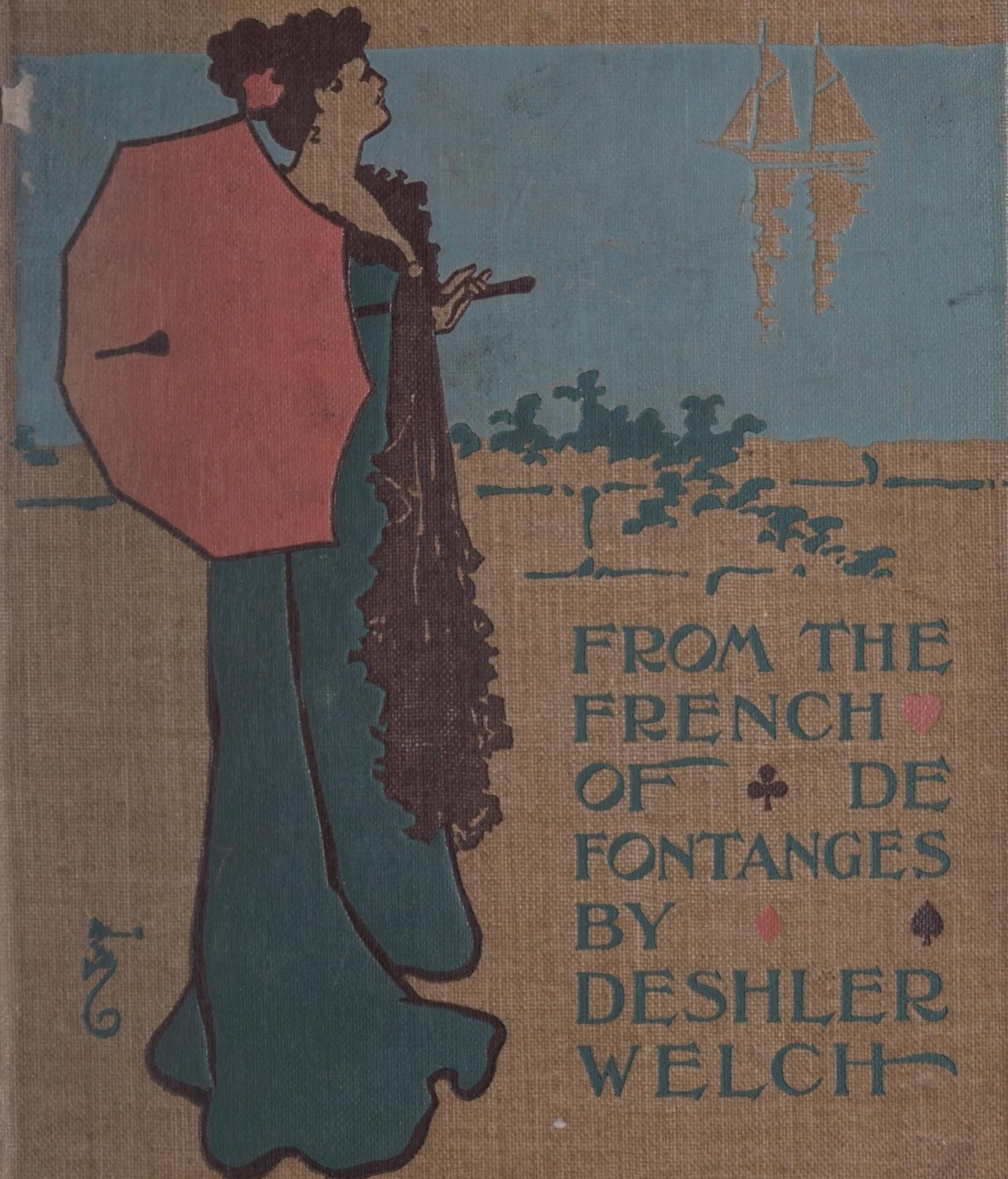


# THE STORY OF LOUISE



FROM THE  
FRENCH ♦  
OF ♦ DE  
FONTANGES  
BY ♦  
DESHLER  
WELCH ♦

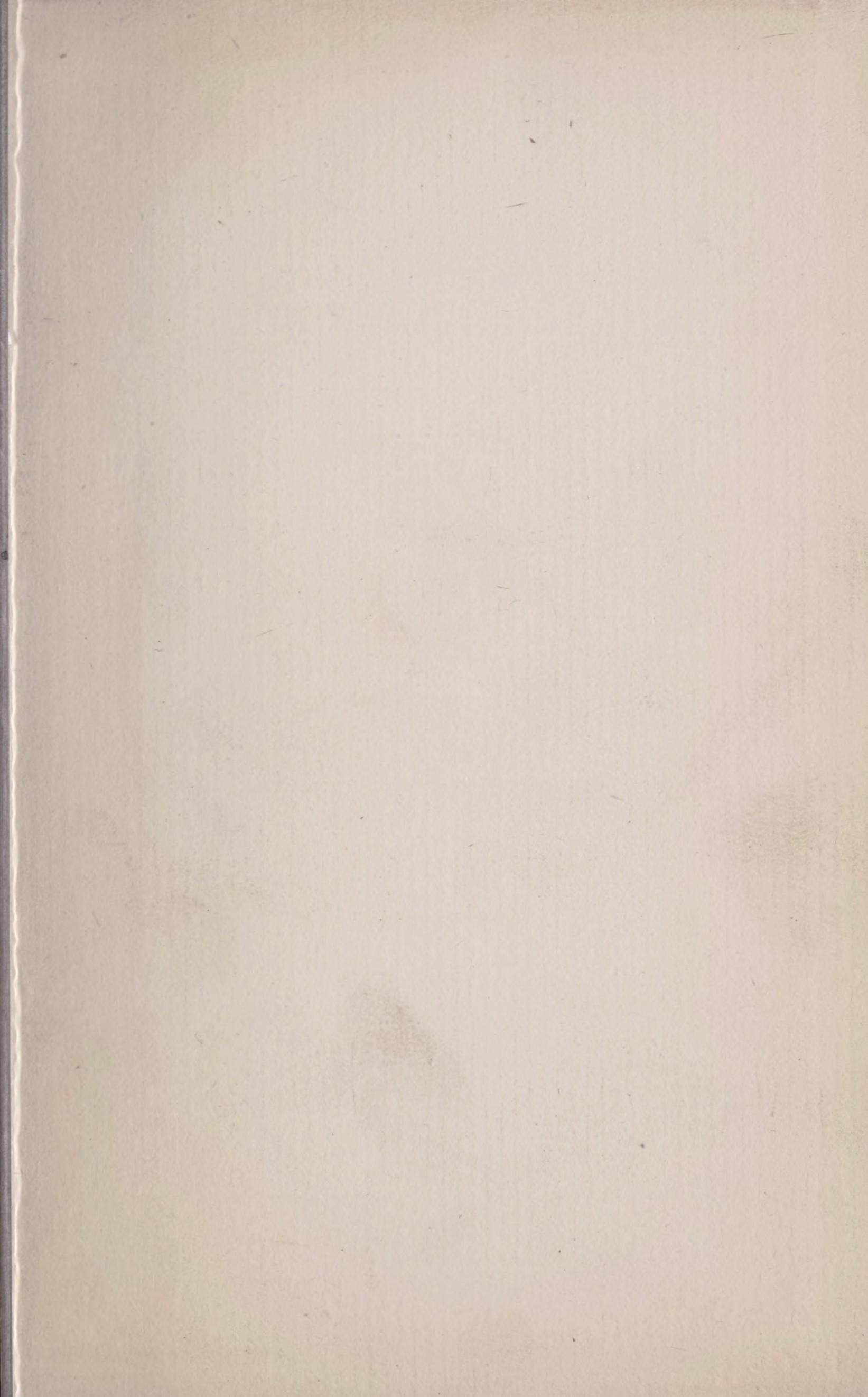


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# **THE STORY**

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# **OF LOUISE**

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*From the French of  
George de Fontanges.*

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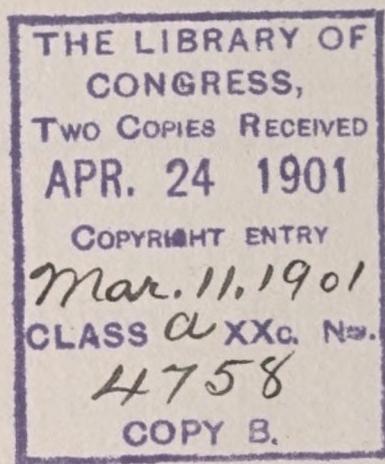
**By DESHLER WELCH.**

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NEW YORK:  
ROYAL COLUMBIA PRESS.  
1901

PZ3  
F735S



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A grid of musical notes on a staff, consisting of 12 measures of common time. Each measure contains a single note: a quarter note in the first measure, an eighth note in the second, a sixteenth note in the third, a thirty-second note in the fourth, a sixteenth note in the fifth, an eighth note in the sixth, a quarter note in the seventh, an eighth note in the eighth, a sixteenth note in the ninth, a thirty-second note in the tenth, a sixteenth note in the eleventh, and an eighth note in the twelfth. The notes are all of the same pitch.

To  
the  
Lady  
of  
the  
Rouge.



## PREFACE.

“THE STORY OF LOUISE” has its daily parallel. The reflections and experiences of Lucien Flavel will not appear to the average man to be impossible or overdrawn. What women will think of them it would be absurd for me to assume.

I think every student of the social conditions as they exist, not only in Paris, but in cities like London, Berlin, Vienna, St. Petersburg and New York, will agree with me that there is a certain value in the circulation of a story such as this. No man is so wise that he is not to be easily fooled by a woman, and women seem to have contempt for men who feel compelled to obey them.

Flavel’s unhappy confession may be useful as a probe.

*George de Fontanges.*



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## THE STORY OF LOUISE

Cover designed by W. W. DENSLOW. Other  
illustrations by prominent artists.



# The Story of Louise.

## I.

### The Wing of a Bird.

**I** AM neither journalist nor feuilletonist; nevertheless what is here written will be printed, no matter how ungracefully it may be expressed or how impertinent may be the arraignment. There is at least a satisfaction in saying exactly what one thinks.

There are a number of ladies and gentlemen in Paris who will foolishly seek to prevent the circulation of this book, but the more copies they buy to burn, the more copies will the publishers print, and then everybody will be talking about it and I shall be considered, in the light of present day stupidity, a successful author.

However it will be only the brief popularity of a one-volume story teller, and

## The Story of Louise

many of my readers will look upon me as an ungrateful liar.

But the government, which is ever on the alert, will protect me as you shall see.

It is the story of a woman and of a friend of mine.

The friend was her husband.

As I am not writing fiction I cannot develop my surprises by the ingenious appliances of suspense, the most powerful factor in dramatic action which my friend D'Ennery so admirably employs. This is a true story and was not theatrically constructed for public approval. More than that, I do not believe the ethics of the story are fitted for a public performance. It is simply a narrative of psychological interest and you must permit me, Monsieur and Madam, the privilege of telling it in my own way.

## The Story of Louise

First, I will describe the woman. She did not have the face of a Madonna. Nature has made that feminine fervour synonymous with maternity. It was sensual. It was full of splendid, dangerous warmth and magnetism. Her hair was a golden-brown; beautiful, alluring, ensnaring. She had wondrous eyes; lustrouly blue, almost diaphanous, very large, and arched by finely marked brows. Her gaze was fawn-like and submissive, but in making it submissive Nature lied.

Her figure was modelled along the lines of Jetaine's goddess, now reposing in the salon of that old fool, Gustave Barbou, whose idiotic idolatry of it is pretty well known throughout Paris.

She had a superb neck. I have seen women look upon it with admiration. I often wondered what their sensations were. As for myself I beheld it with

## The Story of Louise

fortitude. It ran into the roundness of perfect fruit. Her waist was small, her hips were large and attracted the attention of men.

She was in the twenty-fifth year of her career when I was introduced to her by George Cadal. Her name was Louise des Chapelles.

I wish to God I had never met her!

It was at the hotel of Madame Bruton, Rue St. Honore. I had gone there disconsolately, and had asked for an introduction to a wickedly virtuous young woman who was violently flirting her fan at that moment in a desperate encounter with a man who had an oily complexion.

"My dear boy," said my charming hostess, "it will be of no service to you. She is on the eve of marriage, but if you will possess your soul in patience and try my new Erard, I will give you the

## The Story of Louise

opportunity of meeting one who will interest you at once. There is no possible objection to your knowing her."

With this inducement I sat down at a magnificent instrument. It responded with wonderful feeling. An inspiration filled me to the verge of delirium. There it was that I composed "Reve d'amour", a waltz that won for me the praise of Offenbach.

Ten minutes afterwards I was gazing into the hyaline depths of Mademoiselle des Chapelles' eyes. Twenty minutes after we were exchanging confidences.

Before I left her I swore I would be at her knees the next day.

"Do not announce yourself by card," she said, "I will instruct the concierge and you may come to my apartment at once."

I went to her the following afternoon in a trepidation that no woman could

## The Story of Louise

understand or experience. I was there on the second—three o'clock.

That fatal hour!

I was there at the very moment because I had arranged all my affairs with that one end in view.

She, however, kept me waiting by some frivolous excuse for at least a quarter of an hour, during which time I was enabled to study the bold bric-a-brac and all the unclothed art in the room. She entered finally, with the sweep of a princess, and after a salutation that enabled me to almost taste the flesh of her hand, she drew me over to the sofa. I still retained her grasp, or rather she retained mine, for her soft, pliable fingers had a strange tenacity of which I believe she was unconscious. On her right hand, on the third finger, she wore a very large and singularly carved ring. The color was a dead gold. Within the scroll-work

## The Story of Louise

was the wing of a bird, the claw of a lizard, and the head of a snake in which were inserted two eyes of opal. She said it once belonged to her brother, a captain of the Chasseurs d'Afrique, who took it from a hybrid Spaniard he had killed in the field of battle as a legitimate enemy, but who was really a rival in an affair of love. Her brother was afterward shot. She attempted unsuccessfully to restore the ring to the woman whose name was engraved within, and whose identity she refused to reveal to me.



II.

The Evening of the Third Day.

FOR three successive days I was fool enough to believe that Louise des Chapelles was a young woman who was nibbling in the grasses of ecstatic widowhood. I have told you of the first day. It was simply a beginning. The second afternoon I put my arm around her waist, and on the third afternoon the flush of victory drove me mad. It was five o'clock when she sent me away. The sun at that hour was gilding only the tops of the towers of Notre Dame and the Palais de Justice. The concierge eyed me impudently when I passed her. As I pursued my way to the quay Malo-quais, I was hardly conscious that I walked upon the pavements. A singular thrill permeated my whole body and

## The Story of Louise

attuned itself to a mental condition of exquisite harmony. When I reached the banks of the Seine I gazed upon its shining surface as one in an hypnotic trance. It seemed as though a remarkable change had taken place in me; could it be that this was my astral body?

When at length I reached my own apartment I found my faithful Henriette spreading the white cloth on my little mahogany table, and my dog, Prince of Trebizonde, stretched out on the lion skin I had brought from the Graaf-Reinet. Henriette and the dog both looked at me wonderingly. A glance in the mirror accounted for it.

My face was as red as the sands of Sahara!

I could fool Henriette, but I didn't like the apparent suspicion of the dog.

"You are so much later than usual, Monsieur, that I had begun to be

## The Story of Louise

alarmed," Henriette said respectfully.

This comes from being too punctual.  
I must be careful.

"I stopped in to see old Bernard," I replied. "His shop always tempts me and he talks forever."

Henriette, whose family name was Du Buisson, had assisted to wean me, and since then she had presumed upon family connection. This was frequently a nuisance, but she was an accomplished cook, had no relatives, and obtained the salads for my table at the lowest market prices. There was not in all Paris a more admirable administrator in the cuisine of a bachelor. Moreover, she knew how to starch my shirts.

Finally, by luxuriant ablutions—a tepid bath and a quarter litre of violet water—I cooled my blood; I deftly combed the curls of my disheveled hair and mustache, and sat down at my table

## The Story of Louise

while a satisfied bark came from the dog who leaped upon the chair that was regularly placed opposite me waiting for its future mistress.

Being an enthusiastic disciple of Savarin, I was generally attended by good appetite. One need not be a glutton to think of food; I enjoyed much in the measure of its philosophy. The piece *de resistance* on this occasion was a steak *a la Bordelaise* with but two side dishes, *pommes de terre* and maccaroni *au gratin* which was cooked to a turn, and daintily served on silver plates that my great grandfather (who in his time was a greater royalist than Louis XVIII) used in the entertainment of all kinds of men, and on more than one occasion it was said that even Admiral Villeneuve had helped to sweep one of the platters clean enough to decipher the very complicated monogram.

## The Story of Louise

I have a purpose in speaking of these things, and if it does not so appear to you, perhaps when I am finished you will find that in such digression you will have learned something of my character.

After Henriette had served me with a *demi-tasse*, I lighted a pipe and sat before the fire—for it was late in the autumn—and tried to interest myself in Guespin's “Quality of Melancholy,” but it became so lugubrious that I fancied the Prince of Trebizonde was becoming infected. He whined dolefully for a moment just before I fell asleep in the large tapestry chair of my great grandfather.

I was suddenly awakened by the sense of someone standing near me. It was George Cadal. He was a young man with a blonde complexion, who had the privilege of my apartment. Our friendship had been of a peculiar nature; he

## The Story of Louise

was reticent; I was rather loquacious in his company.

Have you not found that there are many men who are capable of accepting all the benefits of the gods without having the slightest sense of the obligation? He was one of them, and I knew that some day I would insist upon extracting from him *quid pro quo*.

He was lighting a cigarette when I opened my eyes on him, and his insinuating expression annoyed me. The Prince of Trebizonde was on his haunches watching him curiously.

“Well, Lucien,” he said, “I have come to ask your advice. First give me some brandy and water, for I need it; then I will talk. Will you listen?”

Of course I cheerfully acquiesced, and rang the bell for Henriette. She brought the glasses and some cracked ice.

“This is the best brandy in Paris,”

## The Story of Louise

Cadal said, as he tasted it with a smack and followed it with a thirsty gulp. He rolled up another cigarette of strong Perique, and paced the floor nervously.

"Come, what is it?" I asked. He stopped and blew a cloud of smoke towards the ceiling.

"I am in love!"

"That is nothing singular," I replied, "you frequently are."

"This time," he went on, "it is serious. I want to marry her."

"Are you worthy of her?"

He faced me with a devilish look of astonishment.

"You put it strangely," he said. "You assume—what? That I am bourgeois—canaille?"

"No, I assume that you are aspiring for the hand of a noble woman, one who is beautiful, accomplished—are you not?"

## The Story of Louise

“She is all of that.”

“She is virtuous?”

“She is an angel.”

“Are you?”

“What?”

“Virtuous.”

“No! by God, no! You are right, I am not worthy of her—but Lucien,”—he stood in front of me, his face white with excitement—“I must marry her; you must help me!”

“What do you wish me to do?” I asked with an air of complaisance.

“Does she love you?”

“Yes.”

His eyes fell; he looked at the dog.

“Then what is the difficulty? You have wealth—and you have position?”

“There is an embarrassment.”

“Tell me—perhaps I can be an ambassador.”

“You can Lucien,” said Cadal slowly

## The Story of Louise

and with a terrible intensity, "you can  
—an ambassador extraordinary!"

"Then out with it!"

"I am already married."

"Married—you—you!"

I fell back in the chair with amazement. I had known George Cadal nearly all my life. We had visited together the haunts of Paris; I had seen him fall in love with the pretty actresses of the Folles Bergeres a score of times; I had been with him in the hospital of La Charpeterie when we had both posed as young students in our rounds with the physicians through the women's ward. I had been with him in the studios of the Quartier-Latin—but he had never confessed this. How had he avoided it? I accused him of duplicity!

"Yes, married," he repeated, "a year ago. I was a fool. I did not want you to know how much of a one I have really

## The Story of Louise

been. I repented it twenty-four hours after the ceremony. But enough. Listen: you are single; it cannot hurt you to help me get a divorce!"

The truth of what he intended to convey did not instantly dawn upon me.

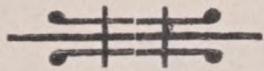
"What do you mean?"

"I want you to make love to her, she knows you, she—likes you—it will be easy!"

"What?" Had I heard aright? "You want me to make love to your wife? George Cadal, you are a damn—" I didn't finish the sentence. I sat down and stared into the smoldering coals. The dog approached me. His tail was between his legs.

"What is her name?" I asked; "the name she is known by?"

"Louise des Chapelles."



### III.

## The Husband of Mademoiselle

I STARED stupidly at my former friend until he turned his face to the fire. He had not the slightest suspicion of what was passing in my mind. I was dumbfounded and amazed. I attempted several times to say something that would have been nothing more nor less than the platitude of a hypocrite,—but for the moment I could barely articulate.

The embarrassment was broken abruptly by Cadal. He looked upon me with an expression of leonine determination. He struck a light for his cigarette and threw the match with an angry movement into the grate. The Prince of Trebizonde, getting in his way, was rudely pushed aside and gave a sullen

## The Story of Louise

growl. Had the dog instinctively taken a sudden dislike to his master's friend?

Cadal poured out another glass of brandy and water and pushed the carafe toward me. The action of helping myself to what the Americans call a large "stiff" drink relieved the uncomfortable tension to which I had been subjected. Then I felt as if I could listen to all that he had to say with a sense of curious pleasure.

There seemed now to be no disgrace in knowing myself to be the lover of George Cadal's wife.

We again filled up the crystal glasses and the tingling that went through my backbone set me on fire with thoughts of Louise des Chapelles.

"Don't let us mince matters," began Cadal. "I tell you again I propose to marry the woman I love—if there is a God in heaven!"

## The Story of Louise

"If there is a God in heaven you ought to be prevented," I retorted, "but as neither you nor I have much confidence in a Diety that is watching the private affairs of the terrestrial animalculae, you will doubtless be allowed to proceed in your own way so long as you are not thwarted by some one who possesses the principles of human decency."

"Then you think me indecent?"

"I do."

"Suppose you fell in love with my present wife—would you still regard me actually so or comparatively?"

"Because I fall in love with a woman who is married is no sin in itself. If I permitted myself to desecrate the sanctity of friendship and foul its nest, I would very likely be degenerate enough to regard your vile scheme as something quite plausible."

## The Story of Louise

“Then, because I am married to a woman I do not love—who ensnared me when I was drunk with absinthe, am I to go on and on, constantly led into all the follies of dissipation and kill myself by inches because a few old grandmothers would be shocked if I broke the fetters that a priest forged with the tongue of hypocrisy and deceit, and married one whose companionship would be a blessing? I say no—I say there is a rib somewhere in some woman that belongs to me and I propose to have it.”

“I wish Adam had died with all his ribs,” I put in meditatively.

“I don’t,” ejaculated Cadal. “The gentleman who invented that story deserves the thanks of the entire masculine gender. It gives man a good excuse and no woman would instinctively have it otherwise. But come, let us get out of here. That dog annoys me.”

## The Story of Louise

“He has good morals.”

“Yes, while you prevent him from having others.”

“I can remove him—if you say—where he cannot hear your diabolical confession.”

“No, I don’t believe he ought to be sent out alone with Henriette unless it be with a chaperone! Let us go round to Le Chat Noir—there we can talk and not fear being overheard; every one there has trouble to convey to some one else, and when we get tired talking we can listen to the immoral amelioration of man. Some one near us will be sure to establish it as the chief object of woman.”

“Don’t you think, my dear Cadal,” said I half jestingly, “that one of Mother Moreaux’s plums would tickle our palates more agreeably?”

## The Story of Louise

"Or," said Cadal slowly, "perhaps the Cabaret des Refroidis?"

But we drifted over where we could pull the tail of the cat and sat down at a convenient table where we might be served by "Fritz," who was of Alsace Lorraine, but who could talk French like a native and generally passed among English or American visitors as the "real article"—to use a bit of their idiomatic idiocy. Fritz often used to turn his back as a screen when we took our second tumbler of cognac, and had thus saved us a great many francs in consequence.

I was glad of the present opportunity. It is somewhat difficult to stab a man in his bowels while he is one's guest. Here I was no longer a prisoner with my thoughts.

I could be the virtuous defender of his wife's honor if I wished!

## The Story of Louise

At any rate I could think or talk as I chose. The room was filling rapidly with gentlemen of uncertain qualities and with not a few whose qualities had been determined by an unsuspecting public. There were literary men, dramatists, journalists and procurers. It was the place of critics. There was a great crowd of them this night; Celine Marechal-Mercier had just made a hit in the "Phedre" and they were discussing her: the ponderous Freron, the cynical Chamfort, the rodent Rivaral, the didactic Diderot, the basking Beaumarchais. Moliere described them when he wrote:

"Il veut voir des defauts a tout ce qu' on ecrit  
Et pense que louer n'est pas d'un bel esprit."

But Theophile Gautier, who writes in floriture phrases, is drinking absinthe in the corner and insists upon it that Moliere wrote like a pig.

## The Story of Louise.

Cadal drank until he became emotional. But his were crocodile tears and I do not care for them. One may drink with a man and so long as the thermometrical state of intoxication remains the same with both of them all is well. Maudlin affection, heroic friendship and the easy purse are opened by a corrugated key that there is some difficulty in duplicating the next day. Cadal had never seemed a bad fellow to me at any time. Blondes are seldom bold enough. They are simply mischievous. Strange that I had never noticed it, but tonight I didn't like the kink in Cadal's beard, and his eyes seemed to be of a sickly blue. Perhaps it was the light and the smoke that gave his glance this strange feebleness.

To be blunt I did not get drunk very easily at any time—they used to tell me —my friends along the Boulevard des

## The Story of Louise

Italiens,—that I could hold a great deal. The Americans have an excellent expression for this. I do not think an actively minded man gets drowned in his cups without a struggle. When a man becomes emotional in the drunken stage of his companionship it is better to give him a kick and put him to bed, else he will tell you all he knows about himself and something distressing about the woman he says he worships.

When Cadal began to tell the adorable qualities of his new Suzette and endeavored to conciliate and facilitate matters by declaring that the limbs of Louise des Chapelles were more beautiful than anything painted by Bougereau I had sense enough to appear indifferent—and strength enough to undergo the ordeal.



IV.

The Fourth Afternoon.

PUNCTUALLY at three o'clock on the following day I was admitted into the apartments of Louise des Chapelles. My moral conscience had been weakened—the will power had been sapped by the intoxication of illicit love. I had defied desire, but had been repulsed by brute passion.

George Cadal was the husband of Louise and I, supposedly a friend, was her lover. I had not confessed to him I already loved his wife—that her lips had been glued to mine with our breaths suspended in an exquisite triumph. I would not admit even under the circumstances that I had been a traitor to my friend. Neither had I promised to enter his wife's boudoir in cold blood.

## The Story of Louise

What a monstrous satire on human consistency! To become his tool, as he wished, seemed to me the most damnable proposition that could emanate from the mouth of one's friend, yet here I was looking neither to the right nor to the left, like an African borele that charges upon its victim without any feeling but an insatiate desire for destruction!

As usual I was kept waiting in the parlour of my new-found affinity and left to my own reflections for many minutes that seemed to have inoculated time with painful palpitation. There were a number of pictures hanging from the gilded rods of the cage that were more or less calculated to increase my trepidation.

At last she came in with a *frou-frou* of—God knows what—and with the aroma of violets that had been crushed in a woman's bath.

## The Story of Louise

With the foolish coyness of the male lover I pretended not to hear her as she entered, but stood gazing out of the window in apparent meditation. She threw her arms around me and I felt her warm breath upon my neck. The next instant I was looking into the depths of her great, beautiful eyes, with her body pressed against my own. The pink flush of her cheeks came and went like the flickering ray of the aurora on a midsummer night. \* \* \* \* \*

The clock of transparent marble struck four times in a rhythmic duet with the raising of a gilded angel's wings that surmounted it. A whole hour had gone by with the swiftness of an executioner's sword.

"In one hour more you must go," she said, raising her head from my shoulder where it had fallen. She arose suddenly and in a startled manner pushed away

## The Story of Louise

the heavy brocade portieres that separated an adjoining room. She listened a moment with nervous dread. "I thought I heard something," she said in explanation, and then with the happy smile of a forgotten conscience returned to my side on the divan. But she held away from me and would not allow me to put my arm around her.

"No don't do that. I want to look at you—let us talk."

She readjusted the violets she wore with that easy caressing coddling that a woman can exercise without seeming to injure the most delicate of petals.

She got up and seated herself in a big cushioned chair opposite me. "Now don't come near me!" she put in playfully. "You look awfully well and I want to see you. I am glad you do not wear a beard."

"Why?"

## The Story of Louise

“Because.”

“That’s a very good reason—isn’t it?”

“Very good.”

“What is the other reason?”

“I hate them.”

Her eyes shone like a sun-glint across a lapus lasuli. Her hands rested on the arms of the chair with a sensuous pre-hension. The high rounding back seem to grow almost animate in its suggestion of luxuriant clasp of its burden. Her wealth of hair in a tremendous coil was pushed against the blue brocade up-holstery in exquisite carelessness, and she was incapable of realising the longing I had to caress it as she occasionally moved its resting place. I shall never—never—forget the rich beauty of her face as it appeared to me then. The whole fabric of her being with all its adornment seemed to be the incarnation of acute felicity!

## The Story of Louise

Once more the clock struck—this time the half hour with one of the hammers of its sonorous chime. It caused me to wake from my contemplating reverie with the start of an apprehensive danger.

She saw the despair on my face, but she laughed like women can laugh at a lover's deprivation.

"Only half an hour more!" I said. "Come tell me something fine—something I can remember and feel when I am in love! Tell me how much you love me." Then I went over to her and sitting on one arm of the chair I leaned across her lap. She looked into my eyes with a dreamy light in her own, which every man thinks of when he tries to poetize his adulation. It is a light that no woman ever saw.

"Well, I'll tell you something very fine indeed," she said softly and brushing away the hair from my brow. "I

## The Story of Louise

am going to Monte Carlo tomorrow.” She did not say it with the least suspicion of questioning as to how I would receive the news. Rather was her whole face lighted up by a childish delight at the thought of it.

I leaned back and stared at her in dismay.

“To-morrow?”

“Yes, is it not delightful, Lucien?”

“No, it is horrible,” I replied ill-naturedly. “Why do you go—why should you—what shall I do?”

I got up and walked over to the clock. Damn it, the angel was getting ready to flap her wings again!

“Why shouldn’t I go?” she said presently. There was a show of coquettish indignation.

“You do not love me!”

“Because I love Monte Carlo?”

“You are like all women. You are

## The Story of Louise

simply happy to captivate, and you love men only because they are not women. As to feeling the depth of it as we feel it—I deny it."

"What do you know—how do you know? Come, sit down here, and look me straight in the eyes and say that over again!"

She put her hands up to my face and brought it close to her own. Then she put her lips to mine vehemently. "Now!" she exclaimed, "don't talk like that any more, Lucien! Have I not given you my love—what more do you want?"

"I want you to love me as I do you. I do not go away from you because I want to enjoy something else! I would not be happy unless you were with me."

"You silly boy! Have I said you should not see me—that I intend leaving

## The Story of Louise

you? You can come with me—the whole world is free to you!"

"Suppose I could not accompany you?"

"Then I would go alone—perhaps you would follow me."

"Suppose I do not?"

"Then I would weep over the inconstancy of man."

"And sit on the rocks with a red parasol?"

"Yes, I would not have long to wait. It is a color that few men can withstand; besides it would mask the blushes that would come when I think of your infamy."

She laughed triumphantly, embraced me with so much affection, and reassured me with so much archness that I was ashamed of my jealousy.

But it was dispelled as suddenly as

## The Story of Louise

the cloud darkens the summer day. She pointed toward the clock.

"In two minutes more you must go," she said. She arose and stood nervously before the full length pier-glass and arranged her hair and smoothed out her gown.

What had I to fear now from George Cadal? She was momentarily expecting him. That I knew, but she did not know that I knew it. Why then should she expect me to come and go by the minute hand of a clock? Why should I not stay and meet him? What had she to fear? She did not love him. That was evident. She knew, further, that it was not likely he would make a scene. His confession to me was an assurance that there was no love lost between them. Perhaps she did love him in a way, and I was made the bone for her to gnaw upon in her passionate hunger!

## The Story of Louise

I put my arm around her waist and she turned toward me.

"You must go now," she said quietly. Don't ask me to explain—sometime you will know. It is best for us both. I shall go to Monte Carlo tomorrow—I will write you, Lucien; believe me I am very—very fond of you! If you come to see me there after you receive my letter, I will explain all that you wish. For the present au revoir once more. \* \* \*

\* \* Oh, how hot your lips are—Lucien! God!—Go away from me!"



V.

### The Red Parasol.

THE Prince of Trebizonde looked furtively at me with his intensely human eyes when I entered my apartment late that night. I had dined at a little cafe where the wine was good and where the broiled mushrooms and the artichokes *a la Americaine* were enough to make one's mouth weep in anticipation. I sat at the old corner table for hours afterward, consuming cigarette after cigarette, and recklessly alternating various liquors. I finally tipped off with *creme yvette*, because it made me feel, somehow, nearer to the woman under whose spell I was now making a fool of myself. Then I

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went home with an unsteady gait and a jealous passion.

I turned up the lamp until it flamed into smoke, and tumbled into my great grandfather's chair in a manner that would have shocked that old gentleman. Perhaps, however, my imbecility on this occasion was no greater than his own might have frequently been. I think we sometimes give too much credit to our ancestors. I was aroused at length by the penetrating odor of burning oil and a whine of canine impatience, that was doubtless uttered in logical disgust.

Away with that fool of a savant who declares that dogs have only instinct and not a reasoning faculty! That convenient term is the shallow application of a tea-kettle philosopher. I fully believe that the Prince was not only endowed with reasoning intelligence, but that his perceptive faculties were keener than is

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generally supposed possible in animals. Scent, sight and hearing we know are more acute in a dog than in a man. Why then should we declare that those things we know not of in human beings are totally absent in the dog?

This is digression—but then you will remember that I warned you at the very start that this is not to be a work of fiction. It is an autobiographical story and I have the privilege of expressing all my reflections as I go along. Perhaps later on you will perceive more clearly why I so zealously perform what you may now consider a work of supererogation.

I had reached that maudlin state which carries with it ineffable conceit of one's own importance and martyrdom, and the possibility of returning to pristine glory. Whether the Prince witnessed the dawning of this I do not

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know, but he showed a welcome companionship by apparently shedding a few tears for me and putting them away with a howl.

I took a glass of brandy because I thought it would sober me up—straighten out my nerves—and allowed the dog to place his big soft paws on my knees where we could converse comfortably.

“Prince,” said I, “you were born among the monks, way up amid the Alpine mountains. Your father saved the lives of many people. Doubtless you are proud of that—but you never mention it. Yet the monks did not know anything about love, at least the kind that I mean, and you don’t either. I can’t expect you to offer me any consolation. I simply want you to stand by me. Will you?”

Prince looked assent, and wagged his tail.

“What do you think of me anyway—

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that I am a fool, Prince? Do you blame me?"

He made no reply; it was plain that he could think of nothing to offer in extenuation.

"I see"—I said to him further—"that whatever may be the difference in our opinions you do not wish to commit yourself. Well perhaps it is wiser if we went to bed and slept over it."

An intervening day of misery. Another one of idiotic despair. It seems but yesterday as I look back upon this period of my unhappiest incubation. I do not think that my conduct differed much from many others in a similar position. Men are not reposeful in love —except those beef-eaters across the channel. They do not love like the Frenchmen, nor yet like an American. Perhaps there are more sinews in beef than in doubtful *gibelotte de lapin*, and

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more food in all than in *petit bleu*. I think it is too much dirty baker's bread, poultry with painted legs, and wine of logwood that fouls the Seine with suicides. An American once told me that during the French revolution it was not blood but claret that ran in the gutters—that our veins flowed with the juice of rotten grapes, and it was their fermentation that the Frenchmen called love.

George Cadal had disappeared from Paris, at least from his haunts. He had, a short while since, given up his apartment in the Faubourg St. Germain, and I had not ascertained from him his new address, so little had I cared. That he did not reside with the woman he claimed to be his wife I had felt almost certain. Yet—and it came over me suddenly in a sweat of excitement—he must have visited her regularly, for had I not been compelled each day to flee from her

## The Story of Louise

at the expected hour of his coming? If it were not he—who was it? It was, at least, not very likely he had journeyed with her to Monte Carlo.

I could wait no longer. I determined that I would follow her.

I did not find my letters in the usual place when I got out of my great grandfather's bed the next morning. Henriette brought them to me with the coffee and looked at me anxiously as I took up one that perfumed the room and bore a huge violet seal.

This is what I read:

Dearest:

You thought me brutal—everything that you ought not to, didn't you, Lucien? I felt that I had to go away from Paris, for a few days at least. I was overcome by much that troubled me and I needed the rest—the sunshine and the peace of it here, where I could look off on the sea and the mountains and sit listlessly on the terrace and hear the blissful music and see strange people. No one came with me but Mimi and Marie, and she has nothing else to do but carry Mimi's blanket and my parasol,

## The Story of Louise

while Mimi leads me by a ribbon rein and looks at the doves when they come down to be fed, and doesn't understand it all. They gave me an adorable room in the hotel where I can see the sun rise if I wish, and I actually saw it this morning! Something awakened me early and I sat by the window for a long while gazing out at the Casino and the cliff of Monaco and the red roofs, and the castles, and away, still further off, at the reat rocky shore of the Italian coast. You see I can be very romantic when I choose. Lucien, and very good too! Would you believe it I really thought of God this morning? I couldn't help it. It may seem wicked, but I did. While I was thinking of His beneficence I saw a figure leaning against one of the balustrades that seemed very familiar. I thought it was someone I did not care about—George Cadal—do you ever see him now? But it turned out to be some other being entirely whom I knew quite as well. Was not that extraordinary? It was a young man I met last year at Trouville, and again in the winter at Madame Bruton's. You shall know him sometime. I would like all my friends to meet each other. Wouldn't that be jolly? It would be comfortable at any rate. We had an early breakfast—you know—and at ten o'clock I was out on the terrace among the cactus plants and flowers watching the yachts in the heavenly blue harbor. Of course I seemed surprised when Monsieur Battin came up to me. In a few minutes he told me everything there was in the world to know and a little bit more, and would

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have held my hand if I had let him. His audacity is different from yours, Lucien! I cannot explain exactly why but I don't think you would get on well together. But he has a yacht—the divinest thing! It is all white and gold, and I can see it now lying just below me as I write. I can forgive him for almost anything as long as he owns that. It is called the "Gadfly"—isn't it odd? Everyone stared at us so—he's very distinguished looking and I flatter myself that my costume was somewhat ravishing. Perhaps it was my big red parasol!

Tomorrow we are going to sail on his yacht—of course Marie shall accompany me, and Mimi, and I dare say there will be others. The day after I will look for you, Lucien. You must come! As I begin to think of you my heart beats wildly and my cheeks must be flushing—I feel that I would faint if I touched your hand!  
Good bye—I throw a kiss to you!

L. C.

As I read the last lines the missive seemed to carry with it an electric voltage as intense as if Louise des Chapelles had drawn me against her breast. But I hated her too! The insidious, devilish archness of her letter; her ingenious parentheses!

Monsieur Battin! As if I didn't

## The Story of Louise

know the most profound little libertine in all Paris. How obtuse Louise thought I must be! And Mimi? The infernal little slut! And Marie? The stool pigeon!

That red parasol! The beacon light for every *roue* in Monaco. God! It drove me mad. I loved her well enough to stab her!

My coffee had grown cold. I rang the bell for Henriette.

“What the devil ails you, my good woman, that you boil my coffee over ice?”

“Monsieur, it was steaming! You have waited an hour!”

So I had—thinking.

She refilled the urn, and as the aromatic liquid bubbled up into the glass globe, George Cadal entered—pale, blue about the nostrils; eyes dilated. He threw off a cape coat and I saw that he

## The Story of Louise

still had on his evening dress of the night, rumpled and rusty looking in the broad light of the morning. On his shirt were a number of green spots. His fingers were soiled a chrome yellow; the nail of his index finger was black. Yet he lighted a cigarette without my permission and inhaled the smoke of it with disgusting delight. If there is anything I detest it is the smell of a cigarette at the breakfast hour. I thought to do away with the temporary nuisance by offering my bedraggled guest a cup of coffee. But he only sipped it between whiffs of nauseous volume, almost spilling it from his trembling hand. Suddenly he said with an air of desperate determination: "I am going to call on my wife—you will accompany me?"

"I am afraid she has not completed her toilet so early," I replied carelessly.

"So much the better. You will then

## The Story of Louise

have the privilege of seeing how charming she is in *negligeé*."

"Perhaps!"

"She is in need of no adornment at all, Lucien; I can assure you of that, and what is strange she knows it! The other day she begged me to take her to the Fiji Islands where she would be appreciated!"

"Why don't you?"

"I am going to Monte Carlo, instead."

"With her?"

"With Louise?"

"Yes—she would be an excellent *croupier*, would she not?"

"You're a beast, Lucien!"

I was thinking the same of him, and we looked at each other curiously.

"No, I will leave you here in Paris," he resumed. "I will show you the way, then you can go to the Louvre together and study archaeology in the day time.

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In the evening you can go—to the devil."

"Thanks. And you?"

"I will go there too."

He called a fiacre when we reached the thoroughfare, and very shortly halted before the door of the concierge whose face was already familiar to me. She was a fat, ungainly creature with a ponderous top that could baffle with any weather, and her pelvic development was of enormous beam. She had a very red face and a pair of eyes like a cat. I think she could see better in the dark than in the light of day. She smelled of garlic much of the time and of cognac the rest of it.

"You are early this pretty morning, Monsieur Cadal," she said with a grim smile at me.

"I went out to hear the birds sing."

"They sing so sweetly in the pretty

## The Story of Louise

mornings," she said as she waddled over to an old mahogany box where she kept letters that had been confided to her. "Yes the little birds go home to their nests early—and they sing all the time—sing all the time! Ah, here it is!" She handed Cadal a small package. He opened it before me and I saw it contained a key and a bank book. There were also a few lines on a bit of paper. Cadal read them quickly and turned upon the concierge angrily. "When did Madame go?"

"The day before yesterday," she replied with malicious mischief in her eyes. "She had M'lle Marie and the little dog—and yes when they reached the door a very fine young gentleman met her just in time to carry her red parasol, then they all went off together! Oh, he was very fine indeed!"

She took a large pinch of snuff after

## The Story of Louise.

saying this, and we heard her sneezing until we passed through the doorway of the apartment that contained the divan of blue brocade.



## VI.

### Don Escamillo.

THEN followed two days of idle and jealous suspense, the chronicling of which I shall not attempt in detail. Cadal had gone to Trouville with joyous anticipation, and impressed upon me that I could have all the freedom I wished if I would go to Monte Carlo and try the change of scene—that it would do me quite as much benefit as the baths of Carlsbad. He hoped for everything and I promised him, in an outwardly perfunctory way, that I would perhaps take his advice. In compliance with a telegram from her I resolved to go to Monte Carlo at once. I also endeavored to wear the philosopher's cap and pretend that Battin, or no

## The Story of Louise

Battin, I would own Louise in spite of him; that I would meet him, if needs be, in the most agreeable fashion I could assume. So thinking I set out.

Like the fool I was (in common with most men) I half fancied I would find her waiting for me when the train drew up at the Monaco station. Why not? It was a superb morning; other women were at the platform—or was it because there were too many red parasols! But I was not to be so fortunate. Even an hour later she kept me waiting full twenty minutes in suspense before she was ready to receive me in a well devised private parlor that was connected with her boudoir. I was ready to be angrily jealous with her, and conjured many causes for expressing displeasure at her varying *equivoqué*.

But oh, the radiance of that charm, when at last she came in, and threw her

## The Story of Louise

cool white arms around me while I stranded kisses upon those lips so like coral reefs!

Instantly I felt as I have fancied drowning men feel—a sinking into a sweet nothingness. To me the relief was the drowsiness of sensuous sleep. Not until then did I know how tired the last few days had made me.

It was yet early and the air was full of fragrance from off the lands after a gentle summer rain.

“We will go over to the Casino, Lucien,” she said. “We can sit down there and talk about everything. I have so much to tell you. Did you get my letter?”

She turned toward me after opening a drawer in an escritoire as she uttered this interrogatory, with a gentle naivete that wholly disarmed me.

## The Story of Louise

"Did you not think it very nice?" she went on.

"The last few lines brought me here—but who the deuce is Battin?"

"Oh you will like him, I am quite sure. He has been very kind—his yacht is simply divine!"

"That is why you like him?"

"Why—yes, you silly boy. Most women like men for what they can do for them—and to make fools of them. You see I know my sex pretty well—don't I, Lucien? There, now I am ready; let's go along. We won't even let Mimi see us. He is out with Marie. I think he is in love with another—dog. It's a lady-dog, Lucien, and I call her Mademoiselle Sara—she has such red hair and looks so painted around the eyes!"

The Metropole was full of people; a cosmopolitan gathering of creatures

## The Story of Louise

every one of whom was singular; queer to a more or less degree. As no one is perfectly healthy in this world it is a sequential axiom that every one is more or less insane.

Schopenhauer says I am a degenerate and I do not believe that I stand alone in my habitat by many odds. I suppose I am considered a degenerate because I believe it is a less sin for a man to break the seventh commandment than it is for a woman. You cannot adulterate a man.

The sun had climbed over the eastward hills, and it was shining brightly upon the material and mental battlements of Monte Carlo, and as we walked along we were one of a jumble of a Persian Parsee, a Chinese Mandarin, a Morocco Panjandrum, a wire-whiskered Russian, a Turk, a Pole, and any number of peculiarly attired Americans—one of the latter wore a great white coat and an

## The Story of Louise

old white slouch hat, and whiskers fringed his chin. I was told that he was a celebrated journalist from New York who drove many young men to the wilds of Chicago by his advice.

We found a settee on the seaward side of the Terrace close to the balustrade, where the music in the Pagoda was not too near and where we could look upon the Mediterranean, or by turning around could watch the people who were trying to represent the gaiety of nations. But there was a wall of flowers also near us and it was a sufficient screen should I wish to hold the hand of Louise.

No sooner were we comfortably seated than she began to chatter like a little magpie.

“Now, Lucien,” she at length observed, “I don’t want you to act like a silly boy. It is too gloriously magnificent here to be filled up by jealousy. Let

## The Story of Louise

us try and be really respectable. You know I love you, and its very nice to have you at my side."

"Until some one else comes along," said I, squeezing her hand until the snake ring made her cry out.

"No. No one—positively not—except perhaps Monsieur Battin. He is very patient—the same as Monsieur Job,—and he's so fond of Mimi. When I get tired talking to him I send him away. But you, really Lucien, I like in such a different manner—don't you comprehend? You know a woman must command at least two men, one her lover and the other her friend."

"And I—?"

"Monsieur Battin is a friend."

"And George Cadal?" I asked looking steadily into the lapis lasuli depths.

She never wavered. She hesitated but did not avert my gaze.

## The Story of Louise

"I see but little of him."

"But you see him more frequently than you do Battin."

"Why do you question me thus, Lucien? Can you not let well enough alone?"

"It isn't well enough! I am crazed by suspicion! Don't you see that I stand ready to be your slave—that I love, love you? I am tormented by doubt; I am despairing! I know more than you tell me, but I want you to open your heart to me—it should not be difficult and we would understand so much better!"

"And you came here to say all this to me?" She got up quickly, her eyes flashing down upon me, and stamped her foot impatiently. "I am going back to the hotel." She turned and started to leave me. I was quickly by her side.

"Don't go like that, dear," I said.

## The Story of Louise

"There are some devils watching us:  
they will think we are quarreling."

"We are! I don't like you now—  
please go away!"

But I didn't go away. I walked along at her side while she tried to hide her face from me by the torchon hangings of her parasol. Finally she burst out with a merry laugh and said "Lucien, I am not angry now. You must leave me at the hotel; I have—letters to write and something to do with Marie. You may come and see me at three o'clock."

"Not before?"

"Not until three, Lucien. Don't you think I am good?" A pink tinge spread over her face and her eyes shone lustrouly at me. I suppressed my impetuosity and left her. Then I sauntered back to the Casino and tried to divert myself. I staked a few louis at the tables and won. I doubled the amount and

## The Story of Louise

won again. I trebled it and still won. There was a crush at another table of roulette. I elbowed my way in. I staked all I had won on a single number —the little red ball rolled around and round and finally tumbled into the notch. Again it did the same. The crowd now directed their eyes upon me and a little Spaniard with a fiery moustache glared at me.

“Twenty louis that you lose!” he squeaked.

A moment later the little red ball doubled my stack, and the Spaniard with an oath paid me his bet.

Then I went out on the terrace for fresh air, and the Spaniard followed me. He dogged my heels as I circled the terrace and at length I turned upon him.

“What do you want?” I asked angrily.

“To give you my card, Monsieur! You may need it!”

## The Story of Louise

"You are impertinent."

"Carrambo! Possibly! Never mind!"

He handed it to me and on it I read the name: "Don Escamillo."

I started to tear it in halves and fling them into his face. Evidently he divined my intention for he seized my arm.

"Monsieur you are a lucky man. The blood of a dozen torreadors flow in my veins! It is not that I mourn my twenty louis; it is that I admire—that I raise my eyes to heaven when I see you! You are greater than all the torreadors put together—for you are lucky in both cards and love!"

"Enough of this!" I exclaimed edging away from him in the crowd of people who were now in mid-day promenade. But he followed me and fearing lest I might create a scene unless I put an end to him quietly, I stopped short. "What do you want of me? I don't wish to

## The Story of Louise

know you—you are insane! Leave me instantly or else I will call a gendarme!"

He did not seem at least inclined to be frustrated. He glared at me with the eyes of a desperate animal that has been shot.

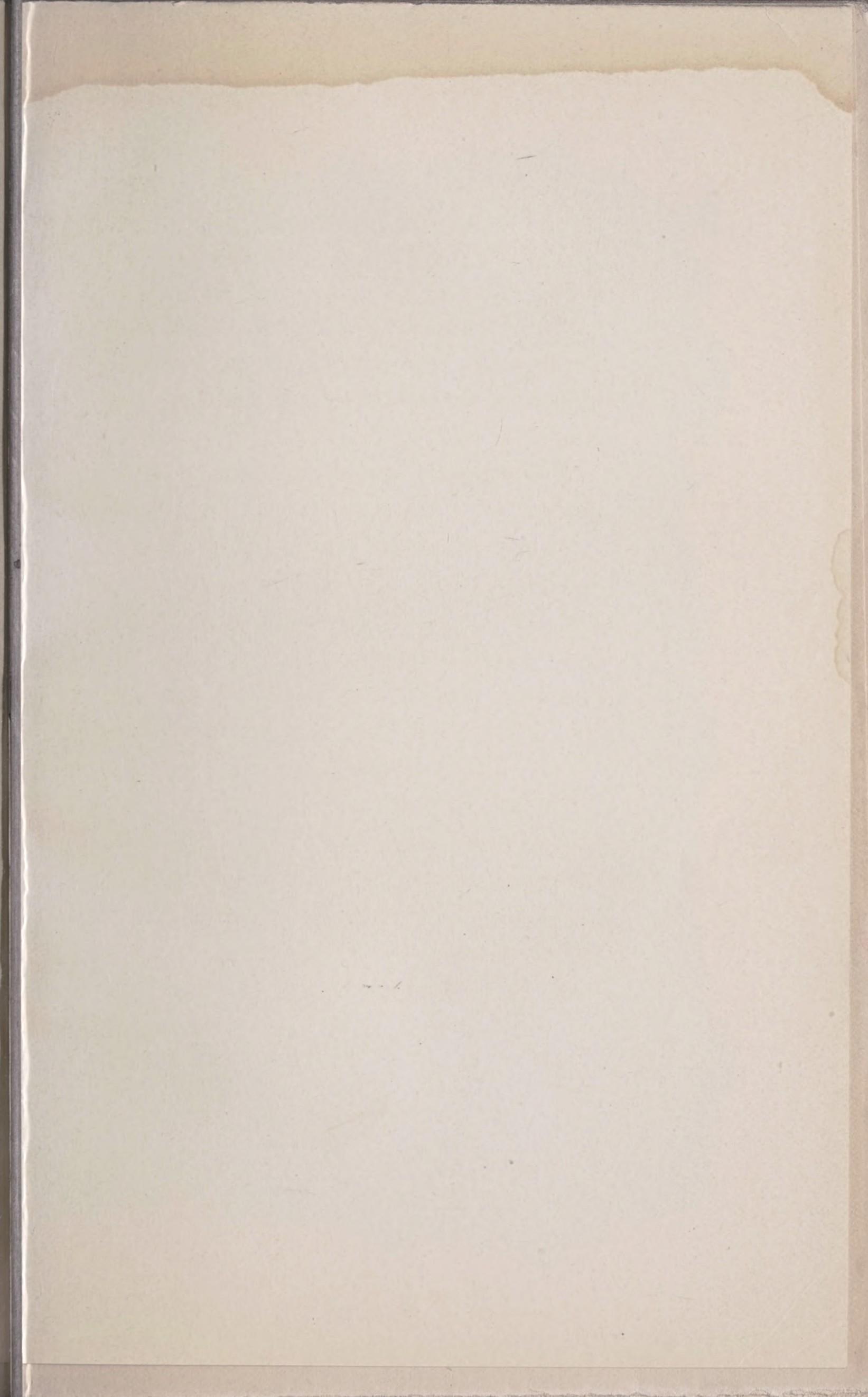
We walked over to the balustrade together.

"Look off there!" he said pointing to the blue water. "Is it not the color of her eyes? Yes? Look off there! Are not those blossoms the color of her cheeks? Yes? Are her teeth not like the pearls that are cast before swine? Yes? Yes? Come?"

"What do you mean?"

"Look and see what is inscribed on the inside of her ring—then ask me!"

Before I had time enough to gather a sufficient reply Don Escamillo, with a waive of his cigarette-stained hand, had





LOUISE.

## The Story of Louise

fled precipitately down a tiled stairway  
as if he intended to plunge into the sea.  
I leaned over the balustrade that I might  
get a glimpse of him, but I saw nothing  
but the white wings of the "Gadfly" as  
they flapped back against the gentle  
breeze as she came to anchor.



## VII.

### The Ride to Mentone.

I DO not wish to tell you, Monsieur and Madame, all the episodes of my daily life at this time. Some things, naturally affected me strongly, and now when I look back upon all of my experiences it is difficult for me to select such portions that are necessary in telling my story, lest I appear entirely too loquacious. If I belonged to that school of "realists" such as M. Ibsen, M. Zola, and M. Howells,—particularly the latter—I would doubtless furnish you with a great many words about nothing at all, but which arranged according to the etymological ideas and ethnographical philosophy of the author, are beheld with admiration by their followers. Yet I do not wish to appear wholly ignorant of

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the values of these gentlemen in literature, and perhaps my careful study of them may result in an appearance of emulation. I hope not; I would prefer that what I have to tell should be interesting rather than literary imbibition. Then again I have not the time left me. I cannot now be prodigal with the minutes.

If I could but hold back the hands on the clock and make time stand still!

As I write this the ticking seems to grow louder and faster. Has the clock a fever—a pulse? Will it beat faster and faster in unison with my heart, and then stop suddenly, and be the end of everything?

What in the devil does this mean? —my fingers seem to stiffen around my pen, and there are strange globules floating before my eyes. There is one—oh, what a color—what a yellow disc and

## The Story of Louise

what a halo of green it has! Has the clock stopped? I cannot hear it—has my heart—how black it is!

\*     \*     \*     \*

It was weakness to be undone like that. I never swooned before. I promise myself that it shall never happen again, come what may, and you will find me brave to my bitterest end.

\*     \*     \*     \*

Nothing occurred to mar the happiness of that afternoon. We dined together in a little white hotel, and had some fish that was cooked well enough to perpetuate its coloring in a picture. Then we had Chateau Yquem, and after that in the mild evening air with gorgeous moonbeams on the Mediterranean we sauntered along the cliffs and through the gardens and thence to the Casino, whither everyone was drifting. The

## The Story of Louise

painted woman smoking a cigarette, who with brazen eyes scrutinizes each face that passes the vestibule of the marble-pillared hall, smiled upon me so familiarly as we entered, that even Louise noticed it and expressed a subtle word of disdain. But I was glad of it; it was the first little evidence of jealousy, and my heart bounded with proprietary delight. She entertained me with her bright observation and used ingenious words to qualify her opinion of the various women we encountered in the crowds around the tables. Some of them with their bony necks seemed to be shedding their skins, and others in their greasy flesh did not notice the detestation of the men who were forced in too near a contact.

Louise ventured a few napoleons at the *trente-et-quarante* table and flushed like the opening rose when she took the gold pieces that had doubled her wager.

## The Story of Louise

When she tried it again and lost she declared that it was all a swindle!

At eleven o'clock, when the croupiers had ceased shrugging their shoulders, we went out into the sweet air and the radiant moonlight and chatted lightly over cooling drinks. It had been all very happy. Neither of us had said anything disagreeable, and the future seemed to be full of unalloyed bliss. She never once mentioned Battin, and I was careful not to suggest his name. I saw her contemplate the "Gadfly" at anchor, but she turned from it with indifference.

Finally I left Louise to her embroidered pillows after a respectful parting and I went to my own hotel, not losing the ten kisses she threw at me from her window under which I passed.

The next afternoon I called for her with a coupe and an intelligent driver.

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She demurred a little bit at the closeness of the vehicle, and possibly with good reason, as her elaborate but tasteful toilet, was worth the showing,—the pardonable pride of a beautiful woman. But as the drive to Mentone was to be a long one, and as there was the possibility of a shower later on, she accepted the reason with a very good grace indeed and said charmingly as I helped her in: “Anyway, Lucien, this is much more private, isn’t it? We can have a delicious *tete-a-tete*. But you must be very careful—won’t you?”

Her eyes shone, glittering with the harmless mischief that many women seem to premeditate in crime with their lover. Even then, after so many days of life in her basking she was an enigma to me.

We had barely started on the drive when we stopped at a little hotel in

## The Story of Louise

Monaco called the "Belle-Vue." We went into the garden for a bit of luncheon, as neither of us had eaten anything since breakfast. We sat in a garden of fig trees, but not for long. From thence on the road was of continuous beauty, cut in the face of a mountain, the close heights of which were covered by fig, fir and juniper trees. Intermingled, the euphorbia plant grew in enormous splendor.

It is all painted on my memory as if but yesterday. Louise overflowed with the enthusiasm of a child in seeing new things, and was constantly exclaiming with delight. It was this seemingly honest quality within her that fed my mind—as artfully as one would distend the liver of geese.

Along on the steep slope of terraces on the side of the road leading down to the sea, was a forest of carab and olive trees.

## The Story of Louise

with wierdly gnarled trunks. Then we passed by the grotto of Veille, where a young woman once plunged into the sea for the love of the Duke of York, who lay dying in Monaco.

The legend drew forth Louise's interest. "Ah, Lucien," she said, "do you think you could ever love me that way?"

"Not to drown myself," I said.

"Would you not want to die—if I did?"

"No, dearest, I would want to live and build in your memory!"

"But you would fall in love with some one else."

"Never!"

And then we looked at each other and casting a shy glance out on the road at either side to be a sure that we were unobserved, she slid one arm around me and pressed my lips to hers. Then we sat back restfully. Never did she look

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so beautiful, and if I thought uncomfortably of Cadal, of Battin, of the insinuating deviltry of the concierge—I put them all aside, determined not to seek my own destruction.

We passed the little town of Rocca-bruna on the hill, just half way to Mentone. A mass of dirty children howled at us and clambered around the carriage and thought perhaps we belonged to some royal family whose coat of arms might have been found emblazoned on the red parasol, the ivory of which projected out the window. But Louise laughed merrily and soon we lost them from the view we now had, which lay about us in unutterable grandeur as we came in sight of Mentone with its two semi-circles in the sea, and sheltered in by high rocks. The town sloped on a hill of the Borrigo valley, and the Rue St. Michael continued through it as the

## The Story of Louise

Imperial Road from Nice to Genoa. How often have I thought of that white clean pathway since then! Do not accuse me of writing a tourist's guide. Perhaps some time your travels may be directed over this romantic route and you will find, among other legends of the vicinage, the story of Louise. But you must have your drive in late winter when the ground is covered with violets.

We went into a little bazaar in the Rue St. Michael. It dazzled us with its trinkets, but alas, they did not appeal to such fancies as ours. But in a jeweler's window we espied a gem, costly, extravagant, but one night's play at the roulette table would pay for it—so why not?

I put it on Louise's finger. It contrasted in startling brilliancy with the snake ring, but there was no room for it.

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"You must put it on another finger," I suggested. I meant the diamond.

"Oh, no, Lucien, I must keep that there," she replied, alluding to the snake ring that was on the third finger of the left hand. Then I saw that I had made a mistake. The shop keeper stood watching us in that obtuse way that most tradesmen have. Why will they never have tact? A tradesman deserves no place in society.

"You must put the diamond there—if you love me," I said in an undertone, taking hold of her hand nearest her heart. Her glove was off, and as I recall that instant touch of her white, beautiful flesh, I grieve even now. But she withdrew it quickly and exclaimed impetuously, with virtuous impatience and with flashing eyes: "Get me that ring, Lucien! I want it!"

She placed it back in its blue velvet

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box, and held it as a child would a captured toy.

"How much?" I said to the jeweler. He was an old man with repellent eyes and a watery nose.

"Five thousand francs, Monsieur, and not one sou less—not one sou!"

"I will give you one sou more than your price, for your damned impertinence!" I returned hastily.

As we seated ourselves in the carriage, I saw Don Escamillo in the opposite doorway idly puffing a cigarette.



## VIII.

### "Pour Quoi?"

L<sup>OUISE'S</sup> eyes may have rested a moment upon the ferocious little gentleman from Spain as she resumed her seat in the carriage, but I saw no evidence of it. She looked out of the window in a careless manner as she arranged her perfumed drapery, but there was no sign of recognition, and he made no movement to attract our attention. As we sped away from the town, and were again on the road, I was electrified by a hand nervously bearing upon my knee. Louise half turned and looked into my eyes.

There was a mantle of silk and fur lying at the bottom of the carriage where Louise had tossed it. I picked it up and drew it over us so that I might conceal her hand within my own.

## The Story of Louise

To be sure we were quite unobserved, even by the *Jehu* who drove us, but somehow or other one prefers to do such things under cover. Perhaps we are afraid that the spirit of our last dead friend may be watching us.

"I believe you really love me, Lucien!" she said after a silence. Her breath was hot and her cheeks were spread with a pink flush.

"I am madly in love with you, Louise," I answered tremulously, and convulsively pressing her hand. "I simply cannot live without you!"

"But you must, dearest. At least a part of the time. You must not be a foolish boy. I won't even like you if you—if you worry me."

"Worry you?"

"Don't you think it worries me to see you so jealous, so suspicious?"

## The Story of Louise

"But that is because I love you!"

"I don't like that kind of love—at least now. You must take me as you found me. Before we knew each other you were really happier, but now you make yourself continually uncomfortable! Think! I am just the same as I was then, I must have my friends—I must do as I have done; you cannot expect me to change myself because I have known you a few days!"

I put my arm around her waist. She was annoyed for a moment. She looked askance at the driver, and out on to the roadway.

"I don't expect you to change," I went on, "but I love you, and loving you I want you, and I want you more! Unless you give me what I want how can I help being jealous?"

"Then I will not let you love me at all. I must be perfectly free! Don't

## The Story of Louise

you see that I don't ask you the questions that you do of me?"

"You know I think of no one else but you."

"I know you think so. I simply content myself with whatever happiness you give me. If you should tire of me I would be philosophical, as every woman would be if ever she expects to be happy at all. You belong to a very strange sex, Lucien! No woman understands its ridiculous assumption, much less its utter selfishness."

"It is the woman who is selfish. She thinks of nothing but her own happiness."

"That is, of her lover's, because she knows that his first and greatest desire is, if he truly loves her, to see her happy!"

"Well, that is one way of putting it, dearest, isn't it?" I leaned over and

## The Story of Louise

kissed her. She gave a merry laugh, and no one I ever knew in all the world could laugh in the fascinating way she could. Then she gazed at me with a mystified, questioning scrutiny, while I was looking unutterable things.

Suddenly she cried out with delight as her eyes fell upon a clump of luxuriant verdure that overhung a jutting turn in the road. Knowing all I did know of her; knowing what she was, nevertheless I could not bring myself to think she was anything else but what she appeared to be then—an undesigning and virtuous woman. I remember as if it were but yesterday how I searched her face, how I noted the expanse between her eyes, and how transparent and unlined was her forehead. It bore not the slightest suspicion of care. Around the brows, and back of the lids, the skin

## The Story of Louise

was as velvety as that of a new born babe.

I thought of it then, as I have often thought of it since, how little need a woman indicate by her face, and how great a tell-tale it can be if she so wishes it! Women are more successful in reading the minds of men, because we poor devils have neither been trained or taught those subtle methods of fascination. The youngest female brat practices the art of coquetry before her doll's mirror, whilst she is admiringly watched with careful solicitude by an experienced mother.

But what is the use of this diatribe? The man never lived, and never will live, who could solve the idiosyncracies of a woman. She always claims to know men. Perhaps she does. But that is not their superior perspicacity. Man knows a dog; woman knows a cat, and

## The Story of Louise

in each knowledge each is superior. Women, like cats, will obey the mandates of reason when they want to, but not when you ask them to. A dog differs from a cat inasmuch as it obeys because it is mutually agreeable. After a cat has lived with a woman for any length of time, the cat becomes inoculated and forthwith laughs or spits according to its companionship. If you find a complacent cat, you are safe in marrying its mistress. After that you should discharge the cat.

Still, perhaps as I am at present situated—as I pen these words—I see through the wrong spectacles. God knows why I am inclined to write as I do! What will it matter one way or another?

The late afternoon could not have been more superb. Louise became ec-

## The Story of Louise

static, pleasantly voluble, and prattled lines from dead poets, and held up my ignorance when I confessed that I had not read any book with the sense that she did. Yet I liked to listen to her wisdom spread out in loquacious observation, for I loved her, and she never spoke that she didn't breathe so that I could feel the warm air fresh from her vitals. When she looked out upon the great reaches of the Mediterranean, I told her it gave me acute delight to compare the glisten of her eyes with the blue of the sea. She gave me a little coo, and a nearer nestling with the back of her shoulders against mine, so I could feast upon the nape of her neck, where silken curls assembled like the voluted congeries of an Ionic capital.

The desire for absolute possession was ever uppermost in my mind; I was morbid and could not resist an impulse in

## The Story of Louise

spite of the supreme contentment that I felt I ought to feel. I had no cause whatever to be jealous of George Cadal! Yet I was so, even more than I was of Battin. I would marry her in spite of that little wretch. I was not the Count of Monte Cristo—neither was Cadal. His income did not exceed twenty thousand francs. I had nearly that, and was frequently lucky at cards. Louise must be spending at least fifty thousand. They grew in her garden. It never disturbed her when I wasted mine. I could hardly expect her to live within my pittance even if she did give herself wholly up to me.

All this I contemplated as I felt her body against my own and watched her beaming face as we sped along on that drive back from Mentone. Finally I said to her abruptly, "Louise, I want you to promise this evening to me!"

## The Story of Louise

She turned her eyes toward mine playfully. "You shall have it, Lucien. You have been so good today that I will reward you. Don't you think I am nice?"

"Adorable!" I answered. "But for how long will it be?"

"You greedy boy! Until eleven o'clock."

I should have been satisfied by this, but I was not.

"And then?" I went on.

"I shall retire and dream of you."

"But I will not go away. I will stay and protect you from such a nightmare."

"Don't be foolish, Lucien. We must observe some propriety, and, besides, I will be tired."

"Are you tired now?"

"Not in the least."

"And so you arrange to be fatigued by the hands of the clock?"

## The Story of Louise

"And why not? Let us be circumspect while we are here. This is not Paris."

"Then let us return, darling."

"Why?"

"It is very hard to be circumspect. I want to love you."

"Can't you love me here?" she asked seriously. "How strange men are! Don't they ever grow tired and want a vacation?"

I couldn't help laughing at this, but still I went on:

"Seriously, Louise, I love you. I cannot get along without you—indeed I cannot. Let us go away somewhere—somewhere in the country. I know a chateau surrounded by a *parc clos de murs* in a corner of the Brie built under the eyes of Madame de Sevigne when she was a girl—picturesque and beautiful—"

## The Story of Louise

"And you would take me there—to the very house that Diderot scandalized?"

"Why not? It has been disinfected."

She smiled at this sally.

"What on earth would we do there alone, Lucien? I am not a Pauline to be wooed by the mere voice of a painter. I can hardly fancy that pastoral idleness would become either of us. Do you think I would care to spend my afternoons sorting poppy seeds and millet? Now don't be absurd, Lucien. I could not go there even if I wished."

"Why not—is there anything to prevent it, if you love me?"

"There is a great deal to prevent it; I have a husband for one thing."

She said this looking at me steadily. I did not know whether she expected me to be surprised or not.

## The Story of Louise

"Did you think that I knew it?" I asked.

"Would it have made any difference? I believed you did know—somehow—but as you did not ask me I did not speak of it."

"But it made no difference to you—evidently," I continued.

"I loved you."

"Do you love me now?"

"Yes."

"More than you love him?"

"Yes."

"Then you will leave him—you will leave him for me?"

"Why should I?"

"You have a cause."

"You mean he has—come, be truthful, Lucien!"

"Why should you not leave him, then?" I persisted. I was becoming vexed.

## The Story of Louise

"Because, dearest," she retorted, "I am very comfortable as it is. Suppose I left him as you wished—left him, then what?"

I was maddened by her evasive questioning and replies. I had withdrawn my arm from her waist and we were facing each other defiantly.

"Why do you goad me thus, Louise?" I exclaimed. "Good God, cannot you say something with heart in it? What do you think I want you to leave George Cadal for?" She looked at me with disdainful surprise, and with an agitation that she tried to conceal—"Merely to play with me? Don't you see that I am almost your dog, your slave; that I am living on every breath you draw? Why should I want you to break the ties that bind you to a man you must daily depreciate; with whom you have no transaction

## The Story of Louise

—whose wife you are not even by name?"

"Suppose, Lucien," she began, her lips paled and her eyes opened almost doubly wide by excitement, "Suppose all that you say were true—"

"It is—is it not?" I put in.

"Do not interrupt me! Why should I be in haste to sever relations, such as they are, that would take me away from a handsome income, and make me dependent on the gifts of others? Now what I possess from him I have a right to. Suppose I did leave him—could you support me as he does? Could you leave me for a single instant to my own caprice?"

"I will love you—Louise! Must you always have excitement?"

"Yes. I don't care for the country. I like it to look at, but I would content myself to see it painted on the scenery

## The Story of Louise

at the opera, rather than leave Paris—  
even for you!"

I turned my eyes away from her. For a few minutes neither of us spoke. I felt a nauseous twinge and my temples were throbbing. Louise, however, did not lose her equanimity. She put her arm slyly back of me, and pressing her knee against mine, said: "Now darling, do let us have a real good time! You know I love you! Don't let us argue again until we are older!"

I promised.

At this moment the persistent fellow who drove us pointed out an old inn which he said supplied good wine for men, and good water for horses. On a table with a dirty cloth, large bottles of yellow fluid stood in the sun in front of the inn door, each with a label more respectable than the contents. But

## The Story of Louise

what cared I so long as I was with Louise?

She was fond of novelty, and this stuff which we drank was soporific enough in the afternoon air to make us forget the troubles of others.

From thence on to Monaco we flew under that lack of astuteness for which public drivers are remarkable.

We had hardly time to feel the blood in each other's fingers!

That Louise might return to the hotel without being particularly observed, we stopped in the market place where I left her.

It is my present opinion that at that moment I was an unmitigated fool.



## IX.

### The Ring.

L OUISE DES CHAPELLES appeared with me in the Atrium of the Casino that evening attired in a black gown laden with jet, and a splash of violets somewhere in its decoration. She wore a bonnet with similar flowers that exuded a perfume as exquisite as if they were real.

Perhaps they were. I was so lost in my proprietary admiration as she glided at my side on the mosaic floor, that I was not impressed by detail. She never offended by any special circumstance of color, however; she might attract attention by her gorgeousness. Perhaps women overreached themselves when they sneered as they gazed upon her, but if they did they were them-

## The Story of Louise

selves not beautiful, and lied in order to shield their own defects.

Women will concoct a falsehood, and then try to believe it.

I have had an opportunity to learn thus, Madame, but in your case I am sure that when you read this you will perceive that it is far from being the truth when applied to yourself.

What I may chronicle concerning Louise may be useful in psychological consideration in the development of my story. Of course I did not then attach much importance to many little devices that interest me so much now. What I regarded as entirely unselfish in Louise seems to be more or less true, therefore I often wonder that such a trait should not have dominated in all her relations. In the matter of dress she was possessed of but little outward conceit. She often told me that she hated her mirror, and

The Story of Louise.

"AT MONTE CARLO"





## The Story of Louise

I believe she did. Once I caught her before it giving evidence of disapprobation. She could not possibly have known that she was observed. Yet I may have been mistaken. If I paid any compliment; if I said to her that she was charming in the costume she was wearing, she would always say: "I am glad you think so, Lucien, it is comfortable to be thought well dressed."

I never knew a woman whose clothing seemed to be so thoroughly a part of her and not an adjunct. With the majority it seems to be an accessory in crime.

I have seen some women whose manner of costuming should be cause for a public inquest.

"I never realized that I might possibly be pretty, Lucien, until you told me so," she said to me one day.

At another time: "I envy that woman because she knows she is beautiful!"

## The Story of Louise

At still another time: "It pleases women to arouse the passions of men, but they fear to arouse their own."

\*       \*       \*       \*

At eleven o'clock there were heaps of gold upon the tables and a crowd of people around them. The croupiers were raking in fortunes, and most of the visitors seemed to be losing theirs. Under the brilliant, searching light their faces revealed painful anxiety or magnificent recklessness.

Louise insisted upon playing. We went into the third room where there were large stakes. She drew a crisp thousand-franc note from her bosom, and when the dealer calmly deprived her of it she did not seem surprised.

"Another one, Lucien," she said to me, half under her breath, as she drew forth a duplicate paper. "Here, take it —play for me."

## The Story of Louise

I did so and won.

“Play again!” she said.

I played again. After that again, and still I won.

“Only once more!” I said to her feverishly.

I was winning thousands for some one else, while my bank account in Paris was overdrawn.

The fourth time I won. Then we returned to the Atrium, where it was cooler and sat down on one of the couches. I handed Louise five one-thousand-franc notes.

She looked at them for a moment pensively and then said tremblingly: “Four are for you, Lucien.”

She placed them in my hand that was resting in the folds of her dress.

I refused them with some expression of astonishment. “I have no need of

## The Story of Louise

them (heaven forgive me), dearest," I said.

"Don't be a foolish boy!" she exclaimed. "I only provided the capital. It would please me, indeed it would!"

She appeared to be actually offended by my refusal. Of course I loved her the more for her generosity than ever before. I saw no ulterior motive. Ten minutes afterwards she was perfectly happy in my disconsolation.

We were interested in watching the people come and go through the vestibule, when Louise's face suddenly bore the pleasant surprise of recognition. A tall fellow with a smooth countenance, blue eyes, brown hair, and dressed immaculately, strolled over to us. I remember being impressed particularly by his thin legs and tight trousers. He was good looking and perhaps not half bad, and would not have made me think

## The Story of Louise

of him as a tempting target for my revolver, if he had not been introduced to me as the owner of the "Gadfly."

"I am delighted!" he said, bowing gracefully, and turning quickly to Louise, "This is indeed a surprise."

"Isn't it? Won't you sit down?" making room for him at her left. "I am glad you know my friend, and I want you to like each other."

We both grinned. "More like a hyena," Louise afterward remarked to me.

Monsieur Battin stood on no ceremony. He was an accomplished flatterer. When he talked to Louise he was close enough to dampen her cheeks—as you would blow on a piece of crystal to clean it. I could not distinctly catch all he said, but I saw there was an abundance of ardor in what he did say, and it was in that confidential tone that only a

## The Story of Louise

cad would assume in the presence of a third person.

But then we are apt to believe all men are cads who do not think as we do.

I was absurdly ill-humored enough to go to the roulette table and lose a hundred francs, while Louise did not even appear to notice my absence. Directly I returned, Battin spoke to me with pleasant assurance.

“Would Monsieur like to go for a sail to-morrow?”

“Of course, you will, Lucien,” put in Louise, enthusiastically.

But it was only natural that I should continue my ill-humor, and speak with the assumed wisdom of a prophet.

“I hardly think it will be fair tomorrow. I saw a lot of feluccas come in this evening in fear of the wind.”

“The Mediterranean sailors are like a

## The Story of Louise

lot of chickens. They run at every capful," replied Battin, good-naturedly.

"You are certainly not afraid, Lucien?" queried Louise.

"Not I. Only on your account."

Battin evinced surprise at my solicitude.

"O, but it is perfectly safe on board of my yacht," he said. "I have a fine sailing master, and I will promise you a good time, Mademoiselle!"

"It will be perfect," she said reflectively, and then—"Monsieur Battin has some fine wine, Lucien, that he will let you taste for my sake. He says it belonged to his grandmother."

This was certainly an inducement. Battin's grandmother! How delightful! Perhaps the old lady had been preserved in the vat. But this suggested the possibility of putting an end to Battin's *tete-a-tete*, so I said

## The Story of Louise

to Louise, with but a momentary glance at the fellow, that I would be pleased to have their company at a little table in the cafe belonging to the Prince of Monaco.

I could at least choose my own seat there, and it would put me into the more distinctive position as host.

I always want to be host to a man I despise. That is where the owner of a yacht has a signal advantage when he is on a cruise. His guest must eat his food. He cannot escape. It is splendid!

The rooms were crowded. A thousand fools were clacking, chattering and performing the work of deglutition as if they were chewing their own brains.

There is not one natural animal function that man does not debase.

Louise and I sat *vis-a-vis*. Battin sat at the end near the carafe.

Louise ordered a *canape* and the wait-

## The Story of Louise

er looked at her as if she had diamond eyes and would give them to him.

Battin ordered brandy, and I followed suit.

Louise began removing her gloves. My recollection of it is, that never was I so under the spell of a woman as I was at that moment. She sparkled with vivacity, and the rich coloring of her lips was more tempting than that of any flushed fruit that ever grew.

As she drew off her right glove she held up her hand and shook it. The snake ring seemed to be alive. I saw it twist and glide up her finger. Then it fell upon the Sevres plate. At that instant Battin seized it.

Louise turned deadly pale. She attempted to snatch it from his grasp, but he playfully eluded her. He did not remark her face. Every particle of blood had faded from her lips.

## The Story of Louise

"Give it back to me at once!"

"Not until I look at it, Mademoiselle —you surely do not object?"

"He turned it over in his paws, and Louise tried to seize it. I could have struck him with the brandy bottle.

Alas, I was powerless to act. We must not create a scene; Battin's intentions were innocent enough. He leaned away from the table and squinted at the inside of the oriental hoop.

Louise had resumed her natural posture. As I glanced at her I did not detect the slightest wavering.

How serious it was to her I did not know until Battin said with a drawl:

"Escamillo! Where the deuce have I heard that name, Mademoiselle? Oh, I remember—at a bull fight!"



X.

**The Sister of Monsieur Battin.**

**F**OR the next ten hours I did not close my eyes. I had kept my own counsel. Louise bade good night to Battin, and I escorted her alone to the hotel.

“You must not come in,” she said, “it is late, Lucien. Go to your lodging and be sensible.”

“And to-morrow?”

“Do you want a to-morrow?”

“Yes—a million of them, with you!”

She held out her hand and I clasped it feverishly. I would trust her still. She looked as defenceless as a bird.

Then I left her and went to my room. I drank a pint of brandy and smoked innumerable cigarettes as I sat at my window and gazed out upon the Mediterranean that was pulsating under a star-lit

## The Story of Louise

sky. I tried to meditate and pulled at one cigarette, and then at another. I could not satisfy myself. I felt as if I must eat them.

So then I drank more brandy.

I was entirely, hopelessly wrong. Napoleon's declaration that morals were not made for such as he, once had my absolute scorn. Yet, here was I, so steeped in the subtle deviltry of the sex, that I cared not for wind, wave or weather. I was utterly regardless of consequences. God knows I had been reckless enough as a bachelor in Paris, but I had always been able to look unflinchingly into the face of my dog. I was become now to behold Louise as my own property. I was conscious of the fact, that were I to ask her certain questions, if she were honest enough to reply, I would be enraged. I had tried persistently to deceive myself. Yet I was quick to take

## The Story of Louise

offense at any man who even assumed the liberty of beholding her.

I was persuading myself that Louise loved me. There was every indication of it. There was no reason for deceit. I was paying her nothing; she must find her investment in me a pecuniary loss, therefore I felt confident in her professions.

But all correlative conditions are productive. Without them there would be fewer convents, and more graves.

Thus I thought until my brain racked with brutal things, and the atmosphere began to vibrate. Then I went to bed and tossed through the rest of the night. Toward noon I fell asleep, but it seemed to me I was almost immediately aroused by a garcon. He brought a little note from Louise. It ran:

Darling:

At one o'clock I will breakfast. You are my brother and may come to my boudoir. I will

## The Story of Louise

give you some delicious *rognons sautes au vin blanc!*  
Can you resist? Afterwards I will do as you choose.

LOUISE.

While I was dressing I rang the bell and asked for letters. There was one from George Cadal. He was back in Paris. He wrote:

Dear Lucien:

You are an ungrateful cub! Why have I not heard from you? I detested Trouville—it is full of chaperones. Genevieve loves me, and I love Genevieve! Is it not a beautiful name? She is more beautiful than the original saint. And she is good. It makes me virtuous even to think of her. I begin to realize that I ought to say my prayers oftener—at all events, visit the cathedrals occasionally. I am leaving Paris again tomorrow. Genevieve has prevailed upon her brother some way to invite me to be one of a yachting party for a week's cruise. I have heard nothing from Louise, but heaven is providing me with strength to bear it. How fares it with you? Do you not think that I am very tolerating? But you see I trust you, my friend. One can always expect one of two things from one's best friend, so don't disappoint me!

CADAL.

This called for no reply. I thoroughly understood him. As I put on my *cal-*

## The Story of Louise

*econs* I determined I would accept Louise for past favors—that it should be the *quid pro quo* that Cadal ought to render. As I put on my waistcoat I calculated that I would not be sued for the alienation of his wife's affections, and so I might consider this an addition to my income! As I put on my coat I considered that my present association was, more or less, a beatific missionary work. I would breakfast on *regnons*—and if Louise would let me, I would eat her too.

She was sniffing the fresh air outside of the window when I was admitted to her boudoir. She had on a heliotrope gown, trimmed with point lace that I knew to be of immense value. Her arms were bare from the elbow. She had taken off her rings, but on one of her wrists she wore a bracelet that I had given her.

## The Story of Louise

A little table was attractively set near one of the windows where we could look out upon the palmettos and flowers. A large bunch of violets filled the room with their odor. We breakfasted as might two persons in the first day of their honeymoon.

"Do you know why I sent for you?" Louise asked, nibbling at a piece of toast and looking at me ensnaringly.

"Because you want to tell me something?"

"Yes."

"What?"

"That I love you."

"Is that all?"

"Is not that enough?"

"No."

"Well then, that we might have breakfast together!"

"And then?"

"We will go out upon the terrace."

## The Story of Louise

At that moment Marie came into the room with Mimi. She was black-eyed and petite, with a pretty waist. The dog had catarrh.

Women will tolerate more in a little dog than they will in a baby.

"What is it, Marie?" asked Louise.

"May I see you a moment?" she said with embarrassed beckoning, which I fancy I should not have seen. As Louise went towards her I heard her begin by saying "that gentleman—" and what followed was indistinct. Then Louise spoke for my special benefit: "Oh, yes, Marie —certainly let Mimi have some exercise."

I longed to stretch the legs of the little beast myself. Louise went to the table, wrote a note hurriedly and gave it to Marie, who went out of the door with a smile at me that was unloyal.

## The Story of Louise

"I am not the only one who thinks of you this morning," I said to Louise.

"You are more honored."

"Than whom?"

"Than the gentleman who is doctoring Mimi!"

How infernally stupid I was!

"And now, Lucien," she continued prettily, as we arose from the table, "I will change my gown and go for a walk."

"Shall I go down stairs?"

"Oh, no, you may remain if you'll be good. I don't mind you. Besides you know you can look out of the window."

I was true to her for five minutes. Then I turned around. Her neck was bare, in a decolette waist that was garnished with lace. She put up her hands suddenly and crossed them on her breast, like the young woman in the dying maiden's prayer. She leaned her head over

## The Story of Louise

until her chin touched her fingers, and then she cast her eyes bewitchingly upward. I went over to her and embraced her.

“This is too early in the morning, Lucien—not until after three!”

Then she ran behind a screen that was almost transparent, and I looked out upon the cactus plants to restore myself.

Beyond was the blue water, and resting upon it was the “Gadfly.” The main-sail was up, and she had apparently just come to a new anchorage from her moorings further below. A gig was shortly dropped over her side and two sailors tumbled into it. A third man followed and took his seat in the stern. It was Battin.

I called Louise.

“He is coming here, Lucien,” she said.  
“You had better meet him below and

## The Story of Louise

send your card up with his—you understand, don't you?"

"Why meet him at all? When you receive his card can you not send to him your excuses?"

"And be a prisoner here? No, he will wait. It is better to see him. Besides he wants to arrange about the yacht.

"Then you will go?"

"Why not?"

"Louise, I dislike that man very much! I am not jealous—I love you! Why do you care for him?"

She looked at me seriously.

"Do you remember what I told you yesterday, Lucien? Must you for ever be finding fault? He is nothing to me; he amuses me—I laugh at him. Do as I say—are you not to be with me?"

I did remember. After all I would trust her. I left her and went down to the entrance of the hotel. Battin was

## The Story of Louise

within a few paces of it, and was impressively attired in white trousers and a dark blue jacket and cap. There were too many gold buttons to suit me. I greeted him decently, however, and it was so evident to him that we were on the same errand that he commissioned a servant with our names at once.

"You see," he said, "that you were a bad prophet. It will be a charming afternoon. I invite you to be my guest for a few days, Monsieur."

I thanked him.

"If Mademoiselle can arrange," he went on, "I would like to sail at four o'clock—no doubt that will suit you? But women have so much to do."

Louise received us in her most captivating manner, and it was easily arranged that we were to be aboard the "Gadfly" at the appointed hour. Somebody was to be chaperone when we ar-

## The Story of Louise

rived at Cannes, which was only a few hours sail. But concerning this I did not give much attention as I had gone to the window and was gazing out into vacancy.

We were aboard the white ship shortly after four o'clock. Louise had taken my advice and sent her trunks, with the exception of a smaller one, to her apartment in Paris. They were accompanied by Marie and Mimi.

The "Gadfly" was schooner-rigged and something like 250 tons burden. Her graceful outlines tapered to the bow with the sharpness of a serpent's tooth. Her decks shone with brass work; she had mahogany lower masts, and all the running gear and standing rigging were quite new. The sky-lights were of colored glass caged by brass bars. The whole beautiful fabric was inspiring.

There must have been twenty men in

## The Story of Louise

the crew. A queer lot they seemed to me—serviceable perhaps; not ornamental. They inspired me at once with confidence. Battin gave no orders whatever. He communicated his wishes complacently to his sailing master.

His name was Remenoncq.

Louise was given a room well forward on the starboard side. I was assigned to a room on the port side, and I noticed that Battin occupied a large one aft—at the right of the companion-way.

We had barely time to look about before orders were given to get under way. There was a fine breeze—a little from the northeast if I remember correctly—and so we made a long leg tack at first that kept the "Gadflay" on a steady course on an easy sea. Battin took the wheel, and Louise and I sat near him. Romenoncq stood forward of the main-mast with a watch at leeward.

## The Story of Louise

It was a superb afternoon. The sky was cloudless, and the sun, well over the horizon, glanced on the water that was kicked up into iridescent bubbles and golden sprays.

It flew along through the lee-scuppers with the hiss of escaping soda.

It danced and flashed and spurted as it fell in our wake, while forward where the "Gadfly" slashed, it seemed like the ripping of a dazzling piece of a heavy blue silk!

The music box was playing "Rene d' Amour."

Then the steward brought us wine—the finest of champagne. We drank to each other, and Louise drank to the sea, pouring out upon it the contents of a glass for old Neptune to lave in!

The music in the box had changed to Offenbach.

## The Story of Louise

"Come, Remenoncq!" cried our host.  
"Let us drink to the ship!"

The sailing master joined us in a glass, and when he drained it, had he disappeared in a display of red fire I would not have been surprised. But he went forward again, after a devilish glance at Louise. Their eyes met, but she quickly turned to me with that stare which made me draw in my breath as it had many times before.

Men are such fools! They assume that woman feels as she appears!

Did she look at Battin in that way? I could not see.

She had the powers of quick dissimulation. She could be orthodox in her glance, and versatile in her virtue.

There is enchantment in this distant view of mine, and I am mystified that I am as able as I am to set down here so much that is dispassionate. You will

## The Story of Louise

wonder when you learn the end, that the phrenological spot of memory and the psychological amenities of individualism remain unaltered.

But let me go back to that afternoon.

It was dusk when we ran into the port of Cannes, under the hills. We came about, and in a moment were riding calmly at anchor—just as I have seen a gull rest from a flight.

Battin surveyed the landing place through a pair of field glasses, while Louise and I held each other's hands. As he replaced the glasses in the pocket by the companion-slide, he exclaimed :

“Genevieve—my sister! Now I shall see her after two years!”

I let go Louise's hand.

Genevieve! Cadal! It all came over me at once.

Great God!



## XI.

### The Wine Spills.

**G**ENEVIEVE, the sister of Battin, with whom my friend George Cadal was in love!

Could I avert a catastrophe? I had said nothing to Louise concerning Cadal's intimacy with me, and I had not sought to win high stakes for my own ends by flinging calumny. He believed himself to be in love with a virtuous and beautiful woman. It was not a liason. I thought to warn him. Perhaps I might accompany Battin ashore and thus be afforded an opportunity.

"My dear fellow," he rejoined at the suggestion, "don't you see it would be an inconvenience? There will be three others to return, and one of them is a very fat aunt of mine! No, I will en-

## The Story of Louise

tertain you better than that; I will trust you with Mademoiselle."

So he embarked and left us alone.

We must always be thankful for something or other.

Louise interrupted my thoughts.

"Is it not delightful, Lucien?"

"Exquisite!"

"But it is too fine to last," she added mournfully, taking my hand. "Promise me you won't fall in love with Genevieve."

"I swear it. I shall love no one else! It is I who will prove true!"

She laughed as a woman can laugh when she knows her teeth glisten like pearls. I looked down upon her dear face with burning love, and felt that come what might I would stand by her —love her—until the end. How she would meet George Cadal I did not know. I only knew that I adored her.

## The Story of Louise

The darkness had fallen and the stars were now shining with the splendor of the blue light in diamonds. A number of the crew came aft and stretched a short awning. Under it the swinging lamp lighted up our faces. We could not see ten feet beyond, but just too close within that radius to be unseen, stood Captain Remenoncq with his swarthy face half crossed by a ray of light that was drawn over his brow like a scar from a jaguar's jaw.

He was tall in stature, broad shoulered, and thence tapered down to a pair of small ankles. He had the moustaches of a Cavalier, the carriage of a swash-buckler, and an eye that a pickpocket would have slunk away from.

I caught sight of him while he seemed to be feasting upon Louise. He had the look of a hungry animal.

## The Story of Louise

Why should he not be hungry when  
he beheld such a woman?

Think of the lusciousness of a pink  
peach!

His gaze was riveted. I tried to divert it, but couldn't. She had turned her head towards him, and the subtle fascination that a serpent exercises over a bird seemed to have seized upon her. I saw her nostrils expand and dilate, and her breast heave as the flush I knew so well crept upon her cheek and curved under her eyes.

I knew then that many men had loved Louise.

I could stand it no longer.

Rising from my seat I walked deliberately to where he stood, speaking as I advanced.

My voice must have penetrated his ribs as well as his brains by its enunciation.

## The Story of Louise

"Captain Remenoncq, what light is that?" I asked, pointing to a star directly over the point of the bowsprit.

He started back, but answered me quickly as he shifted his position.

"That is Venus."

"She is worthy of our admiration," I said, lowering my voice. "In that direction lies no danger!"

He bowed stiffly. He was not obtuse.

"As it pleases Monsieur," he said.

I thought he answered with insolence. I afterwards knew that it was chagrin.

Some times in our lives, after many years, we can recall a trivial incident with startling vividness. In the transaction we paid no heed to it. It might be the waving of an apple blossom in the fresh air of the morning; the trickling of a brook—the smell of a camelia on a dead body—the peculiar perfume in the hair of an adored one—all at once

## The Story of Louise

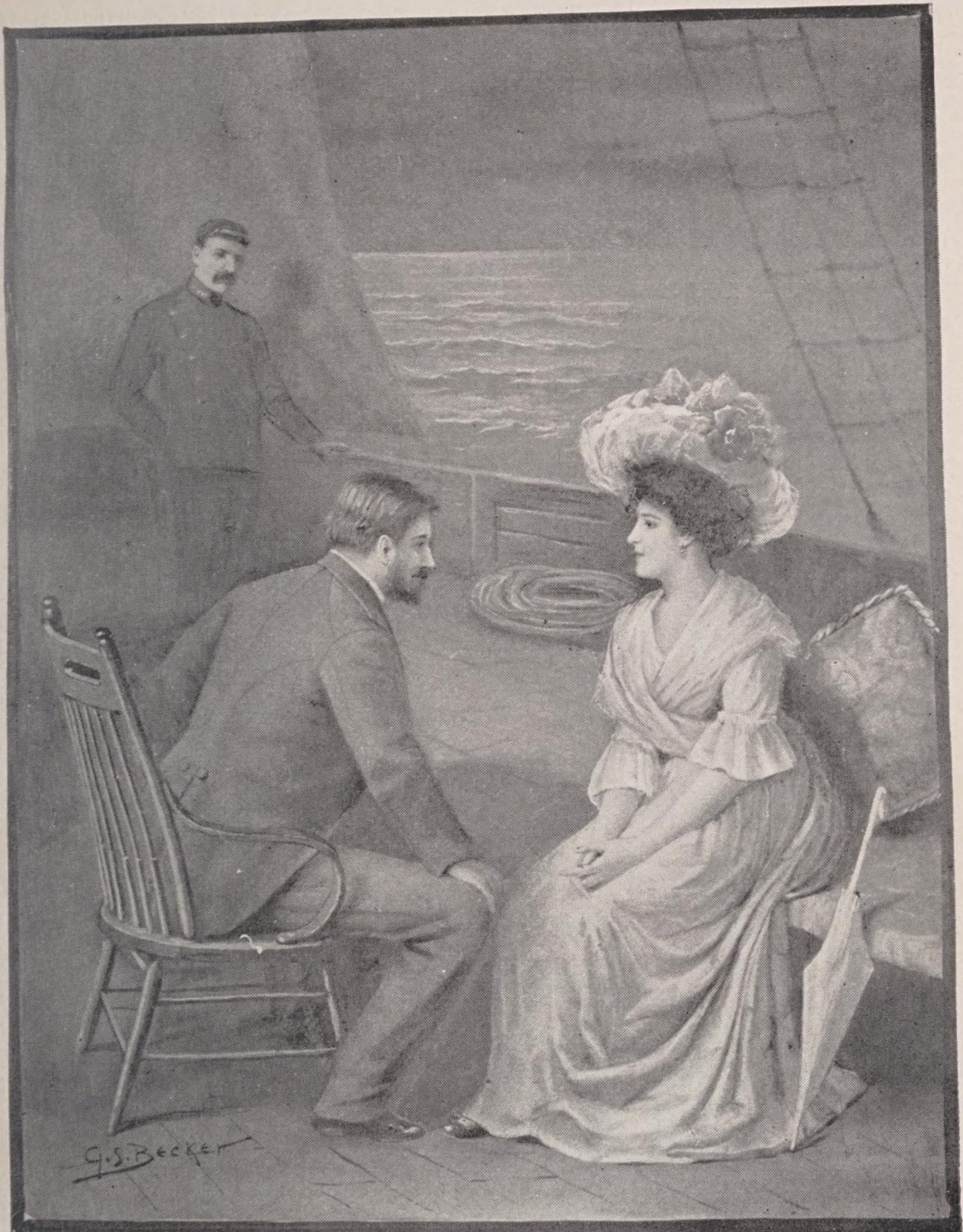
it comes back to you in a sudden moment of singular conception.

Again at the side of Louise I felt only a trembling of her hand which I attributed to a feminine alarm at my abruptness with Remenoncq, and the glance of her eyes gave me no serious thought. But the memory of it has just come over me. Now I see what I did not see.

It was three bells by the cabin clock. The steward stepped forward and addressed Captain Remenoncq, and then came over to me.

"If Monsieur would please to dine, Monsieur Battin would prefer it, I am sure. He is no doubt detained by the late mail train," he said respectfully.

"I am sure that I would prefer it, Lucien," Louise put in emphatically. "I am as hungry as one of those little bears we saw in the garden."



"I knew then that many men had loved Louise."

The Story of Louise, Page 135.



## The Story of Louise

"Very well," I said to the steward, who went below, giving a sigh of relief.

We do not realize the tension of a good cook!

No restaurant in Paris could have excelled in the presentation of the dishes that were put before us. The red wine was as smoothly seductive as the oil of forbidden fruit; it mingled with the blood of the *Chateaubriand financiere* and the substance of it created the desire which we scorn in the brute.

Man is a glutton, restrained only by the limits of purchase—woman by her corsets.

"Monsieur Battin is proud of this wine!" said the steward as he poured champagne into iridescent glasses with hollow stems that were coiled like the virgin tung on a grape vine. It was a *brut* with a taste that set every nerve

## The Story of Louise

and fibre of the mouth into quivering ecstasy.

The steward retired.

We sipped of the wine and let the wet of it on our lips come together with delirious delight.

Then she handed me a rare magoustan and we divided it and ate of it like children.

I believe the wrath of God manifested itself after we had partaken of the fruit, even if it were an Asiatic apple. The air seemed suddenly to grow oppressively warm. The "Gadfly" began to rock with a strange unsteadiness. Louise was the first to notice it and started up with the quick intentness of a kitten. She was very pale and I led her upon deck. Mascarat, the mate, had taken a position at the wheel, and landsman though I was, I saw enough to know that something was wrong. I saw, too, that we

## The Story of Louise

were under way. The swell of the sea was right abeam, and the whole aspect was inky black.

“What is the matter?” I asked of the mate. He wore earrings—otherwise he might have been the cast off Count of X—.

“A storm, Monsieur,” he replied. She doesn’t hold. We must run into the teeth of her.” He showed his own.

The wind came in fitful spits and we seemed to make no headway. Indeed, as far as I could observe, we drifted leeward. The little ship began pitching in a distressful manner, and the swell struck thunderously under her counter.

In the cabin we heard the smash of china-ware, and the expletives of the steward. At every lurch Louise grasped hold of me in fright. Remenoncq was giving orders. All the canvas appeared to be in its place, and the whole fabric

## The Story of Louise

grew wonderfully emphatic in its demarkation.

Then there seemed to be a cessation of uneasiness, and the rain fell in torrents. I did not know its portent as a seaman would. We had sought refuge in the cabin. Louise was hysterical, and lay grasping at the cushions.

Then came a sound that burst upon us with horror. The whole sky was torn into a gash of blue and red flame that was followed by a crash of thunder that seemed to be the tearing of mighty sheets of iron!

It was impossible to stand; the yacht was like a prancing horse.

I crawled to the companion way and pushed one of the doors open. Both Remenoncq and Mascarat were struggling with the wheel. They were covered with oilskins and I could hardly see their faces. Then there was a ces-

## The Story of Louise

sation of wind and Remenoncq ran forward giving orders, while the mate bore hard down. What the manoeuvre was I do not know, but the storm died as quickly as it was born, and once again the binnacle light shed a still glow on the cockpit. I heard the rattle of chains and the splash of the anchor.

We had gone five miles or more in the drive, and neither the captain nor the mate could give me much assurance as to our bearings. I was determined to make the best of it.

Louise quickly revived. I felt that we had gone through a danger, and was not ungrateful. When she suggested that I should invite Remenoncq into the cabin I did not hesitate. He glared at me furtively when I approached him, and then his expression relaxed into a decent possibility of comradeship. Perhaps my jealousy had carried me too far.

## The Story of Louise

At the cabin table he was unabashed. He spoke in the platitudes which women like. Louise plied him with questions that he answered with easy assurance, but from his replies I could gain no knowledge concerning himself.

It was apparent that if he were not well born he had been received in the houses of the rich in certain quarters where veins were not opened to determine the quality of blood. In such connection Louise did not evince curiosity. Once or twice I saw her blush when he was disposed to be loquacious, and finger her glass uneasily.

Finally she arose.

"I beg your pardon—Mademoiselle!" Remenoncq said. "It is late. You need not fear to retire. It will be impossible to return to Cannes tonight. Monsieur will have faith in his yacht

## The Story of Louise

and is not apprehensive. In the morning you shall see him."

He showed her to the door of the state room, and I went in and arranged the lamp.

"You will be comfortable here," he said.

I looked at the bed. It was worthy the resting place of a princess. She bade me good-night cheerfully and we went back to the cabin table.

Remenoncq filled two glasses. "It is my privilege now to act as host in the absence of Monsieur Battin. Let us drink to the health of all on board—to the Madam!" he said, putting the glass to his lips.

"To the Mademoiselle!" I exclaimed, in correction.

"To Mademoiselle!" he said calmly.



## XII.

### Captain Remenoncq.

**R**EMENONCQ excused himself with an unctious placidity and went on deck.

I sat contemplatively at the table and smoked.

I wondered whether Louise was sleeping.

I looked up at the skylights. They were not transparent, and were closed. The port hole windows were covered by curtains.

The companion slide was partially open.

If I were to shut it I would be unobserved.

I peered out into the gloom. Forward, I saw Remenoncq sitting at the head of the cabin top. I could see by the light of a match he struck that his

## The Story of Louise

back was half turned. Then I slid back cautiously and went over to the door of the state room occupied by Louise, and knocked at it gently.

In a moment she opened it. Her light was dimly burning. She had on her *chemise de nuit*.

"Oh, it is you, Lucien?" she said in a little tone of surprise.

"Whom else?"

"I—I don't know, I was almost asleep."

"And you thought I was the concierge and we were back in Paris, and it was a message from—me?"

"Yes—you foolish boy. I wish it were so! I hate this."

"We will go back to Paris in the morning if you say."

"Anywhere—quickly—I am frightened. Go back to your room, Lucien."

"Kiss me!"

## The Story of Louise

She put her arms around me, and I saw her pink toes as she drew my head down.

“There, good night!”

She closed the door softly, and I heard her fasten it. I had only time to resume my position at the table when Remenoncq appeared.

“You are wakeful,” he said.

“And you?”

“I shall not sleep.”

“A sentinel?”

“For the ship’s safety,” he answered carelessly. So you may go to bed.”

“I had rather be entertained.”

“Then let us go on deck. It is stuffy here—besides we might arouse—Mademoiselle.”

He led the way and we went forward where there was a chair in which he bade me be seated. He leaned against

## The Story of Louise

the starboard shroud reflectively. Presently he spoke.

"Monsieur, you told me that in the direction of Venus there was no danger. I forgive you the insult that you meant—"

"Sir!" I exclaimed, half rising.

"I beg you to remain seated. You said you wished to be entertained. To accomplish that we must first forgive each other."

"Go on."

"You are a younger man than I. You have a temperament that demands the punctuality that is the politeness of kings. It is the most infernal thing with which a man can be afflicted. You ask a woman to meet you at three o'clock. She will meet you at four. You ask a woman to love you, and she swears by the fig leaf that her first mother wore that she will give you her

## The Story of Louise

soul. But she only rents it. She will tell you that a man is not capable of understanding a woman's love. He cannot. It is beyond comprehension. It is a complex conceit. It is a coemption for the time being."

He paused.

"I believe you, and I do not believe you," I said. "There must be some woman who could love—as I would love!"

"There may be. You must find her."

"And you think that would be difficult?"

"Unless you diverge from the path that you now think is embowered in primroses."

He paused again, and lighted another cigar. I inhaled a cigarette hungrily.

"Why do you say all this to me?" I asked.

"Because I know of you—because I

## The Story of Louise

am willing to sacrifice any possible friendship between us, if I may be the means of actual service."

"You are strangely kind."

"Yes, perhaps."

"Why should you care what happens to me?"

"You shall know if I am permitted to speak freely."

"I will listen."

"You will promise to quietly hear everything I say?"

"If you do not insult me."

"Well, then, a few moments ago you knocked at the door of the state room, in which you found Mademoiselle was wide awake enough to hear you"—

"Monsieur!"

"You promised to listen—wait! You were answered—she kissed you—dismissed you, and you heard her lock her door. Is this not so?"

## The Story of Louise

"And you are a spy?"

"No. I see that I have told the truth.  
I surmised it."

"Go on."

"If you should now go to her door  
you would find that the bolt has been  
withdrawn."

"That is absurd. Besides, it would  
mean nothing."

"You shall judge when you hear the  
story I wish to tell you."

"Proceed."

"When France sent an army into  
Algeria to teach the Arabs what it  
knew about wielding the sabre, it also  
established a refuge for some of the  
most desperate criminals in Paris. In  
the costume of the 'Chasseurs d' Af-  
rique' hundreds of necks were hid from  
the guillotine. Many of the police were  
sent to Algiers, and among them was a  
man by the name of Remenoncq. So

## The Story of Louise

valuable did his services become, that when he sought a commission in the army it was not long before he had the right to be as proud as a turkey in his braids and buttons. Some time, perhaps, you may be interested when you come across his name in the '*Tableaux de la situation des establisments Francais dans l'Algerie.*' It was in Algiers that my worthy and very brave and distinguished parent subsequently endeavored to rid the harbor of the 'Roche sans Nom' in order to admit the French fleet. A Spaniard who was an accomplished engineer was consulted. His name was Escamillo. Between the two became established an indissoluble bond of friendship. On the death of his friend, my faithful progenitor received as a souvenir, a curious ring. It was elaborately carved and represented the

## The Story of Louise

wing of a bird, the claw of a lizard and the head of a snake."

I started and arose to my feet. Remenoncq waved his hand at my impatience, and proceeded.

"This ring afterward fell into the possession of his son. It was worn by him when we fought the Prussians. Attached to the regiment was a young vivandiere with whom the officer became very much enamoured. He loved her ardently, and would have been most honorable in making her his wife. He had placed upon her hand this ring, and thus they pledged their betrothal. One day she disappeared. She went to Madrid, and under the assumed name of her lover, won the intimate friendship of a young man who had become a bull fighter. His name was Escamillo, son of the engineer. The first lover completely crushed, almost annihilated by

## The Story of Louise

the loss of one upon whose possession he had set his life, retired from the regiment and became attached to the Préfecture of Police. I am that man. The name of the woman was Louise des Chapelles."

Remenoncq had well anticipated the effect of this disclosure. Before I had time to reply, but not before the blood had mounted to my temples and then coursed back and filled my whole being with madness, he placed his hand on my shoulder.

"Now, my young friend, am I at liberty to prove my first assertion that it is not for you alone that Louise des Chapelles withdraws the bolt on her bed-room door?"

"Yes!" I exclaimed. I was beginning to freeze. The perspiration was dropping as it slides from off the water pots of Egypt.

## The Story of Louise

"Then follow me," said Remenoncq, "and stand by without. The cabin light will shield you."

I did as I was bid. He walked along the little passageway until he came to her door. He knocked slightly, he pushed it open, went within, and I heard the lock snap.

For five minutes I waited in the desperate anxiety of one whose nerves are unstrung, as only such a fool's as mine can be. In that five minutes the scheme for vengeance for which I must yet pay the penalty, was devised by me with an adroit diabolism of which up to that time I had not believed myself capable.

\* \* \* \* \*

Now, Monsieur and Madame, you are looking for a clever denouement — a stroke in authorship that will reveal why this book was on the shelf whence you borrowed it.

## The Story of Louise

You will be disappointed. You must wait; I promised you there would be no complications.

I will admit that here I am afforded an admirable opportunity to present an interesting situation—a better one, perhaps, than any my young friend, the Chevalier Alexandre Dubissant, introduced in his ‘Autobiography of a Demirep,’ which you have read, and which your young daughter is reading at this very instant.

You will find the book under her pillow.

We should have a censor whose function it would be, in the first place, to prohibit the circulation of every story without a moral. The life of a creature of the demimondaine as told by a consort should be free from self-perjury.

Louis Phillippe—and France never had so good a royalist—once told my

## The Story of Louise

father, that crime had been extended more by the work of the Immortal Forty, than by any social system which jailors represent.

He was right.

He said further: "There are thousands in the prisons for stealing bread, but the bankers who swindle the government are allowed their freedom."

Do you comprehend my parallel? To be frequently ambiguous is the proud license of every great author.

I have another theory in bookwriting. I believe an occasional chapter should be permitted to the author for the development of his arrogant sophistry.

By such entre acts, the reader will be able to gloss over a great deal without losing the thread of the story.

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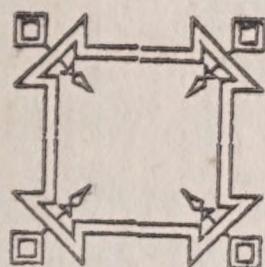
Remenoncq came out of the door and strode toward me.

## The Story of Louise

He unfastened the lantern that hung like an uneasy pendulum from the main spar, and held it closely that I might see the glittering of the snake.

I remember that his hand trembled, and I recall his quick breath.

"This is my father's ring!" he exclaimed. "The rock in the harbor of Algiers has been removed. The water now lies many fathoms deep where I shall bury it!"



XIII.

**Alger La Blanche.**

**G**OD only knows how the morning was reached at last—a cold, dead day that began with a flag of red streaks laid over the stars that had sickened and died and then faded away into the greyness that decomposes.

All the night I fought against the insanity of an impending doom that I was to create myself.

I slept the moment but to awake the next, after a dream in which I had embargoed my soul.

When the day broke I beheld myself in the glass as one would look upon the countenance of a stranger.

I had reason to fear the creature reflected in the mirror. He appeared like one who would stab me in the back!

## The Story of Louise

The crew were holystoning the deck, and scrubbing the brass work, and sending the swash from the buckets swishing through the lee scuppers. They were in their bare feet, with trousers rolled up to their knees. I remember looking at the skin on their shanks and wondering whether the mothers of it were mourning or dead. Perhaps these progenies were all rascals like I was to become, and had been begotten among the ash heaps of Paris.

It was early, too early to expect any signs of breakfast. The smoke was pouring out of the galley funnel and was floating heavily down upon the water, and mingled with a low mist that seemed to encumber its whole breast. We must have been a long way off land, for I could not see even the line of it, but then I was not a sailor and did not know the obscurations on the sea.

## The Story of Louise

But what mattered anything? What did I care? My heart had become heavier than the weight that drags down the sounding line, and I drank from a glass to stay a nausea that was overcoming me.

Louise appeared upon the deck and came to me almost radiant with life and enthusiasm.

I greeted her with assumed nonchalance. It was not altogether difficult. Nature had passed its compasses into the hands of the devil, and I was marking out new diameters and circumferences in my brain.

“Shall we go to Paris this morning?” was the first thing she said.

We were standing alone where none could hear us.

“Not to Paris, Louise—somewhere else. Will you come with me beyond the sight of everyone who could know

## The Story of Louise

us—where you will let me love you the way—I wish?"

"But just a little in Paris, Lucien?"

"Listen a moment," I said abruptly. "Let me tell you something. George Cadal is expected on board this yacht this morning. He was to join our friend Monsieur Battin's sister—"

"Genevieve?"

"Yes. He is in love with her, and has been invited to be one of the guests. Do you wish to meet him?"

"No—no!"

"They must have been detained last night. Perhaps they will not arrive from Paris until today. We can go to Marseilles at once and thus avoid them."

"And then?"

"To Algiers—to my patio!"

"Well, yes; I would like that."

I did not flatter myself that Louise

## The Story of Louise

at this juncture cared in the slightest degree to make such a journey with me for the sake of my companionship. I knew that she was glad to flee from Remononcq; that she had sense enough to keep away from Cadal, and that she feared any possible exposure with Battin.

Already I saw in her the versatility of the Ecchelian goddess!

But she had finally met the implacable prince!

\* \* \* \* \*

We left well framed excuses and departed in the small boat. Remononcq bade us good bye like an uncloaked Dante, and we were rowed ashore by the fellow Mascarat, who wore the big earrings, and had eye teeth like the men in the period of Geughis Khan.

We met none we knew at the wharves. Soon we were speeding on the way to

## The Story of Louise

Marseilles, and late in the afternoon, with but a moment of refreshment at the Hotel des Ambassadeurs, we left its harbor of rigging, and the "Ville of Madrid," with us upon its deck was ploughing its course to Algiers.

Twenty-four hours afterward, that out of consideration for you Madame, I should separate by asterisks, we were gazing at a distant white city wreathed in the green of olives, under a golden moon, and perfumed by geranium.

That night I looked upon the sleeping face of Louise for the last time. She lay upon a divan, stretched out in the unconsciously loose and extended lines that the female cat assumes in the parlor of its mistress.

Her lips were parted in feverish breathing, with intermittent sighs that brought the almost opalescent pearls in her mouth together with a little clash.

## The Story of Louise

Her breast was like the wondrous heaving of a piece of marble under diaphanous lace. One beautiful arm was stretched bare above her head, and was half wrapped in the wild scatter of the gold-bronze hair that covered the pillow, and hung over like drapery. The other arm hung loosely from the couch, and the finger tips were nearly touching the floor. From it had fallen the bracelet in which the dangerous diaspore was sunken.

Perhaps it would decrepitate with violence if I struck it on her wrist!

But it would not kill!

The light from the lamp had been extinguished, and as I stood and looked at her, the gold glow of the late moon shone in upon the floor and reached up the couch, and penetrated the hair and seemed to be unravelling it in a voluptuous embracement.

## The Story of Louise

I kneeled and caught strands of it and took them into my mouth in hungry ecstasy and delirium.

I could have clawed at her beautiful neck as a wolf fastens its fangs upon the throat of a lamb.

With men, love becomes an insane ebullition of the passions. With women, it becomes a happiness.

With woman, it is contentment. With man, it is the dethronement of reason.



XIV.

The House of Zohr.

M Y RECOLLECTION of the following morning is confused. I remember that it was nearly one o'clock when I finally came out of a drunken stupor. The flame in the lamp was dying, in a little red struggle of embers in the M'chacha where I found myself. I lay on the matting breathing the soiled atmosphere, into which had crept the scent of orange blossoms and musk. The hot sun was pouring through the open doorway and had struck on my face and burnt into my skin until it wakened me from my hashish dreams of white doves that flew around me until I seemed to cry out in terror as I beheld them flutter into a living cross, into which, suddenly, and with fearful cruelty, my dog, the Prince

## The Story of Louise

of Trebizonde, leaped and crunched the neck of one between his teeth. His jaws were full of white feathers, and the red blood trickled down as I once saw it fall down from a knife in a sacrificial feast, and I awoke just as I had rushed to him and was trying to share the booty with ravenous hunger.

I staggered out into the air that was filled with the scent of roses. A woman of Arabia, with an oval face, and eyes as black as the night, that was fled, was passing and threw orange water at me from a gold bottle, like a pepper-box, and smiled upon me with oriental insinuation. I may have leered at her; she turned her head away with that look of feminine disdain that one will see among all the races. It must have been handed down by Mother Eve when her husband blamed her for tempting him with the fruit. Following this Pandora,

## The Story of Louise

was a little girl that bewitched me. She wore a long white chemise: that is the only way to describe it, with fine gauze sleeves, and over it was a gandoura reaching near to the ankles, and covered with the prints of birds and branches. It was all in light silk, and around the waist was a wide ceinture. On her gold hair that was plaited in long lengths, was a conical cap of crimson velvet.

Why do I detail this? Because I wish to test my memory to show you that I am not insane as I was then—yet now, God help the devils, I am watched as if I were a penetrating tincture of aconite.

I wish to heaven that I was sleeping as peacefully as that old Algerian saint, Bon Medine, sleeps in his kouba!

I found my way to a Moorish bath, and after a not altogether choice mingling with a lot of perspiring Arabs, I

## The Story of Louise

felt myself at least refreshed by an application of pumice stone and cold water. From thence I went to Louise's bedroom that looked out on the colonnade. She was resting on a divan drinking coffee from a copper pot, and she was ravishingly attired in a *robe de chambre* of pale yellow silk of the softest texture.

One of her slippers of like color had fallen from her foot and lay on the floor touching the nose of a tiger skin. I saw that her stockings were of a deeper shade. Louise seemed to have costumes for every clime, and her voluptuousness in dress exceeded any vision in the Orient I ever saw. She wore ingenious garters at her knee, made of the finest gold and studded with pearls. The bands had been welded in place, and I never possessed the courage to demand the name of the jewel-smith.

The soft breeze that came into the

## The Story of Louise

room, caught the filmy drapery of her person, and as it seemed to unwrap itself, displayed an opalesque sheen of an undergarment on her breast that was so delicate in its ochre, that no butterfly would have committed a crime against it by permitting the juxtaposition of its most delicate wings.

I stood thus for a moment beholding her, unperceived.

I contemplated.

*She was too beautiful to live !*

If I could bury her under an almond tree I could go back to the M'chacha, and when I had become depraved enough, they could, when it was between the moons, bring me out on a litter, and then, perhaps, our whitened spirits could join each other in the Paradise of Mohammed. There none of our old friends would meet us !

She greeted me with a salutation that

## The Story of Louise

would have graced the most innocent woman in Paris.

"You look pale, Lucien," she said pleasantly.

"I have reason to feel so," I answered somewhat impetuously. "I was rubbed with a stone at the bath—"

"And you drank too much last night," put in Louise. "Come, a cup of this strong coffee will do you good! Here, sit down beside me!"

She put her hand through my hair and drew my lips down to her perfumed breast.

No wonder there are so many inmates of the institution of Salpetriere!

She made room for me on the divan at her side, and looked into my eyes with a curious studying stare that once would have caused me to succumb to any demand, but I beheld her with a resolute determination. She could not have di-

## The Story of Louise

vined a single thought of mine, yet suddenly she pushed me away and I fell half seated on the floor.

“I don’t like you this morning, Lucien—I don’t like the way you look at me!”

“And so you fly at me as a spoiled child?” I replied, rising as I spoke and gazing out on the terraces that were dazzling white under the mid-day sun. I was trembling in anxious anger and dread. I had always been quick in temper, easily pacified, and unrevengeful. Then came up within me a singular and sudden calmness. I shed one consciousness and took upon myself another kind, as completely as a serpent sheds its skin. I seemed to be filled with a bloodless inspiration as I turned and faced her. She was playing with her fan and watching me wonderingly.

“Come here, you silly boy!” she ex-

## The Story of Louise

claimed, laughingly. "Come! you shall kiss my white arm!"

I went over to her, and lifting it up I did kiss it as I had a thousand times before—kissed it with the seal on my lips that it would be the last—kissed it with lips that seemed to be marble!

I gazed into her face and saw her eyes watching me, not with passion, but with the reflective look that a woman might bestow upon the infant child of her predecessor. I saw what I had never fully realized before. But I was capable of some dissimulation. I suggested a stroll, and Louise had changed her garment in a twinkling.

"I will show you Algerine life. First we will visit Mustapha Superieur."

"What do you know of it, Lucien?"

"I lived here one winter as a Saouarr."

"As a what?"

"As—an artist."

## The Story of Louise

“In what?”

“I painted portraits from Moorish models. I had a tent among the fuschia and geranium, and I almost died from the breath of the eucalyptus tree.”

She looked at me enquiringly.

“You never told me you painted portraits.”

“Because I gave it up when I met you—I felt it would be of no further use. I painted to reach an ideal.”

We went on up the heights, and into a patio, and sat by a fountain where the water played over roses and jasmin and splashed on lilies and honeysuckles.

We watched the manoeuvrings of a glittering troop of French cavalry on the race course down the hill below us, and when we went up on to the elevation of El-Biar, the Mediterranean and the slopes were like a distant panorama.

## The Story of Louise

"How very beautiful!" exclaimed Louise, clapping her hands.

"And now let us visit some other apportionment," I said. "I will show you how the real Algerines live."

"I should very much like to see the inside of one of their houses, Lucien."

"I will show you one that belongs to me—that I bought and deserted."

"Bought with money?"

"In a way—but you shall see. It has a keeper, if she is not dead."

I had aroused her curiosity, and later on she followed me gaily through narrow streets and tunnels, and to a door with a big brass knocker that I pounded until we were let into an inner court by a young Arab. Finally, we were admitted into a chamber that opened out on a court of red tiles, across which the shadows of oleander boughs were lying.

The inner door was open, and I knew

## The Story of Louise

that Zohr was at home, for Zohr was a courtesan and never closed out the sunlight.

Zohr met us with surprise and transparent astonishment. Louise eyed her with curiosity, and then glanced at me with surprise. It needed but a side whisper from me, and Zohr left us alone.

I heard her close the outer door.

Louise was examining the place with rapid feline scrutiny.

Finally she sat down upon a sill between two columns and contemplated me with peculiar interest. I was standing on the blue tiled floor in front of her.

The moment was come when I felt that we would understand each other better than ever before. She certainly did not exhibit any suspicion that I had brought her hither for specific purpose, nor was there any reason why she should

## The Story of Louise

suppose that I had any extraordinary motive. We had been having other moments when any climax of difference could have been more conveniently reached.

It all seems like an hour ago!

She was perfectly self-contained; she was neither pale nor agitated, yet she anticipated me—she was the first to speak.

“Lucien, don’t you think we had better put an end to this silly nonsense? Don’t you think it rather absurd for us to travel around as if we were a couple of juvenile tourists—”

“What do you mean?” I asked.

“You know exactly what I mean—that I have been making a fool of myself.”

“That is,” I returned, “you have been

## The Story of Louise

making a fool of me, that you have been playing with me!"

"You were useful." She looked down at her feet, and then at me with about as devilish an expression as I ever saw in a woman's face.

"And now you wish to throw me off—now that you are tired playing with me —how dare you tell me this!"

"Why should I not dare? I dare do anything—I—" she reached down and lifting up her skirt, calmly pulled up her yellow stocking and fastened it to the gold garter—"I am not afraid of you, or anything!"

I was livid with anger, yet somehow or other I was propitiated by Satan himself and fiendishly devised to argue a question, the ultimate end of which would be my own premeditated accomplishment. I folded my arms and stood

## The Story of Louise

before her with the passiveness of a professional executioner.

"Then I am to understand," I proceeded, "that I have simply been useful to you—that I am one of a chain gang that numbers your husband, George Cadal, Captain Remenoncq, and that poor little devil—Don Escamillo, the bull fighter?"

"Suit yourself!"

"And who would it be next?"

"I shall return to my husband."

"She looked at me unflinchingly. I couldn't believe that it were possible for a woman's eyes to change so much—but I have learned that a woman is capable of anything; even of being good.

She pronounced the name of 'husband' in a certain way that astounded me. I advanced toward her — near enough almost to feel her breath.

"The man you now dare to speak of

## The Story of Louise

in that way is dead to you, and you know it—*even as dead as you will be to me!*"

"You do not know George Cadal!" she suddenly exclaimed with passion. "You do not know him at all! See here, Lucien Flavel, you thought him your friend—you were a fool! It is I to whom you are indebted—do you understand? It was I who arranged his little vacation—it was I who wove the net in which you were a poor miserable fly! Sometime you will learn as I have learned, that there is no such thing as a friend. The most contemptible of acts are done by them—I gave them up long since. George Cadal and I suit each other's purpose! Now what do you think?"

She leaned back, propped up by her hands that rested on the sill behind her. I could not believe my ears. To what

## The Story of Louise

purpose I had been put I could not see, nor have I seen. Perhaps I would have discovered it had the chance been permitted me. It was impossible to conceive as I stood there before her that I had been entirely blind. Good God! had I not looked into her very soul through her eyes—were all the intimate hours mere fantasies—was it all one great dream? Was I insane? Of course, I must have been, for had I not calmly premeditated disaster in the house of Zohr—was it not all arranged by me with the cunningness of a madman? If I had learned so to hate, or so to love that I hated, was it not possible for Louise to have discovered the uselessness of it all? But if she spoke the truth—why—good God? What had I done?

She sat and eyed me with an expression of challenge. She even fell into an easy abandon of kicking her legs

## The Story of Louise

against the marble slab, and giving her head a toss that loosened her hair and let it fall in a mass about her shoulders.

To her question I responded without art; I met the challenge with nasty decisiveness.

“You are a liar!”

This was all I said. I went over to the door and bolted it in a way that could not quickly be undone. Louise had watched me, and now jumped to her feet in sudden alarm. As I turned I saw her face deathly white, and that her hand went to her breast. As she struggled to unbutton her dress, I sprang forward and seized her wrist. At the same instant a poignard dropped from her corset to the floor. I put my foot upon it, and then grasping the other wrist I held her for a moment as if in a vise.

“You are mad, Lucien!” she screamed.

## The Story of Louise

Her courage had left her, and she stood pinned before me, frantic with horror.

“Yes, I am mad!” I said to her, but it was hard to articulate. “I am mad as men are often made over the women they love, and who have been the dupes of them! I brought you to Algeria because I loved you, and that we might die together—I brought you to the house of Zohr, where you could stay alone with the worms, for by God, I will live now and avenge myself! I will know how to treat all women, and how to beware of my friends!”

She broke away from me and ran behind a pillar, and thence to the door.

She tried to unbolt it.

I picked up the knife.

She shook at the door, and then turned upon me in a shriek of despair.

“What would you do, Lucien—oh, for God’s sake let us be calm, for the sake

## The Story of Louise

of the Holy Virgin—Oh, Mother of Jesus, look down upon us!"

She had fallen to her knees. Her beautiful hair touched the tiled floor like a silken sweep. Her eyes searched the roof, hunting for the light of heaven.

I saw even then that she was beautiful. I thought her breasts would break with convulsion—I saw that she had bitten her lower lip, and drops of blood had fallen on the white lace that was about her neck.

*The handle of the knife was in the shape of a cross!*

"Kiss it, Louise!" I cried out. I placed it at her mouth. Then I put it against my own lips and soiled them with the red fluid of her life.

*Then I buried the blade of the knife up to the hilt, directly over her heart, through the delicate white skin of her*

## The Story of Louise

*breast, and then I laid her back on the floor.*

Then I fell upon her and covered my face with her hair, while I reached for the knife and drew it forth.

Then I heard the brass knocker bang on the outer doorway.

Once, twice—three times it fell. Then some one cried out:

“Let us in—let us in!”

“Yes! Yes!” I answered. How could I have forgotten? It must be Zohr! She would help me clean up the blood!

I staggered to the bolt and drew it back. I saw the look of terrible amazement on the face of the young Moor as she pushed by me hurriedly and went over to where the body of Louise was lying. I heard her scream — then I heard her scream and scream again, and I saw others following her, who desper-

## The Story of Louise

ately pushed by me as I held the door until my arms were strained!

*They came in great crowds;*

*They surged by me like the overwhelming flood of the Catadupa;*

*They seemed to be a procession extending from Hell!*

There were monks and priests among them, and brightly caparisoned acolytes, and then it seemed to change into a feast of the sacrament, and I thought I heard an organ diapason that ran into a velociissimo away up in a cathedral loft!

The congregation were gathering about me! But it was not the Laus Deo they sung!



## After Decapitation—Then What?

IT WOULD seem a work of supererogation to write this chapter. Of what possible use could it be? You have no further interest in the disposal of such as I—you nor your heirs, nor your diseases can possibly be benefited by any further chronicling in the affairs of the several gentlemen of my acquaintance you have met in this narrative.

Perhaps George Cadal has married the lovely Genevieve. Such would be the conventionality of fate. That sort of damnation of virtue happens every day, so why not?

I declared to you when I first took up my pen to write this book, that as it was not a tale of fiction, I would not attempt to deceive you by any ingenious sur-

## The Story of Louise

prises. If I were a professional novelist, I would erase much that I have written and make a number of interpolations that would show very plainly the underlying motive for every act. I simply must content myself, however, by writing the actual facts under my own observation and let you explain the mysteries to your own satisfaction.

The story of Louise as I have written it, is simply a story of passion and insanity, such as Paris knows every day. Its streets are full of misguided young wretches such as I have been, who needed but the right moment for escape. I can see that I have disgraced the name of my great grandfather, and his friend the Admiral.

If I could but see the Prince of Trebizonde, I feel sure he would stick by me.

## The Story of Louise

God knows how I got here—in this jail!

That was weeks ago.

Why, I was nearly mobbed because I wanted to bury Louise under an almond tree!

Now I am to be guillotined! For what? Simply because I loved a woman madly?—or because I stabbed her?

The procurers in the courts of France do not try to establish justice. They seem to be in the pay of the executioner, who in turn must receive a royalty on every head that is chopped off.

You wonder how this manuscript is to find its way out of the jail into the hands of the printer? I will tell you. I have a political friend. There's Remenoncq, for instance. Well, he's the man. I saw him yesterday and we actually laughed over old times. He is in the Court of Enquiry now. He says I

## The Story of Louise

am not half bad, and hopes my book will sell well. The money will all go to Henriette. I am not ungrateful. I do not forget her salads.

I hope they won't make a mess of it when they chop my head off! I have some uncomfortable theories. We know that every cell in the brain has its own life and lives for a time after the blood or outside nutrition is cut off. Thus the million cells in our brain must live after the head is severed!



## XVI

### A Courteous Consideration.

I have been permitted to correspond with my old acquaintance, Dr. Broussais, on this question. He is an enthusiastic decapitateur. He writes me as follows:

"The shock may cut off motion, but I do not think it will instantly destroy your consciousness.

"The cell does not die so quickly as one would be led to believe. There is no way of finding out by present methods of observation how much time is required for its death to become apparent in the organ of the mind, the brain. Consciousness after decapitation must be, and does not instantly cease.

"Physiology teaches us that after the head is severed from the trunk all the blood supply to the nerves is destroyed. The direct loss of blood which comes by arresting the exchanges of gasses in the brain, does not take place for some minutes after decapitation. The cheeks remain red, and there are other signs. Therefore, why should consciousness cease instantly? Do I not know it to be the cause of the biting or snapping at the air manifested by decapitated animals? This phenomenon is well

## The Story of Louise

marked in the head of a tortoise separated from the body.

"If you had time (which unfortunately you have not) to study the rapidly fatal parts of these factors and the respiratory theory, you would observe that at first the respirations become quicker, and then after an attack of general convulsions, ending in respiratory spasms, there follows a stage of complete cessation of respiration. Before this takes place there are usually a few snapping or gasping efforts at respiration. All this is after the head is severed from the body. The life of the brain, therefore, must be retained for some time, from the very fact that though separated from the trunk, its nutritious blood and gasses (taken from the fund stored up in the cells) are in sufficient amount to carry on life for a period unknown at present as to time.

"I do not believe that all the brain cells die simultaneously. They have their individual life. I am of the opinion that in death from certain diseases the brain cells are last to die, and that they can live a certain period of time after outward manifestations of death, perhaps for three hours, until rigor mortis sets in, for instance, in apoplexy, in hemorrhage, or primary hemorrhage, and typhus.

"If I know that an ordinary cell lives after being removed from a living body, why, then cannot one brain cell also retain its life when the conditions immediately surrounding it are much the same as during its previous existence, for it requires some hours for all the blood to drain from the decapitated head of a man. Recently

## The Story of Louise

I cut off the head of a chicken and after certain stimuli it opened its mouth and gaped for nearly five minutes. I cut off the head of a rabbit and found it susceptible to light for many minutes after it was apparently dead. I was able to ascertain this by holding a strong electric light in front of the eyes and moving it alternately near to and far from them. The pupils of the eyes followed the light in its movements, expanding and contracting. I was able to tell that the animal was capable of smelling by the use of certain pungent odors placed near the nasal organs. I was enabled to know that the decapitated animals on which I experimented were capable of feeling pain, because I stimulated certain muscles and got reactions which were not due merely to the muscles themselves.

"As to experiments, of course, a complete demonstration could be made only at the guillotine, where special arrangements could be made for testing the sensations of smell, heat, sight, &c. during the minutes or hours after your death.

"It would give me pleasure, Monsieur, to wait on you at that moment—and do what I can in the cause of science. I believe you will at all events have that moment to realize that you have not been altogether useless in the world."

I am more or less pleased by this letter. Broussais was always very courteous to me. French physicians often

## The Story of Louise

hide their ignorance so completely under a garb of elastic politeness that his astuteness and scientific knowledge is worth recording. I have written him proposing that he should first try this vivisection operation:

"Cut away the larynx in connection with the nerves of my body, and then cut off my head and see if I will be able to make sounds after decapitation. You may be able to obtain a noise or yelp by pinching certain of my muscles, or by the application of the electric cautery. It cannot help proving successful. The yelp will be sufficient evidence. I think this experiment would prove of vast value and would inspire me to go to the guillotine with the bravery of a martyr."

### POSTSCRIPT, 10 A. M.—

Could the irony of fate go further? They have given me a boiled calf's ear fried in the Italian way for my breakfast!

I have completed my toilet, but the gentleman who is especially waiting on

## The Story of Louise

me says, that I need not be particular about my collar!

Well, Good Bye!

*From the Paris Courier.*

## THE END OF LUCIEN FLAVEL.

Dr. Broussais has announced to the representatives of the various journals that had manifested much interest in the case of Flavel, the murderer of Madame Chapelles, that the experiment he had been allowed to make on the decapitated head of Flavel had developed the fact that the consciousness of the man had extended over a period of forty seconds; that he is positive of a satisfied look of recognition, and if it had not been for an unlooked for accident in which the head dropped from the table and bounded on the floor like a canon ball, his subsequent examination would have been full of surprises.



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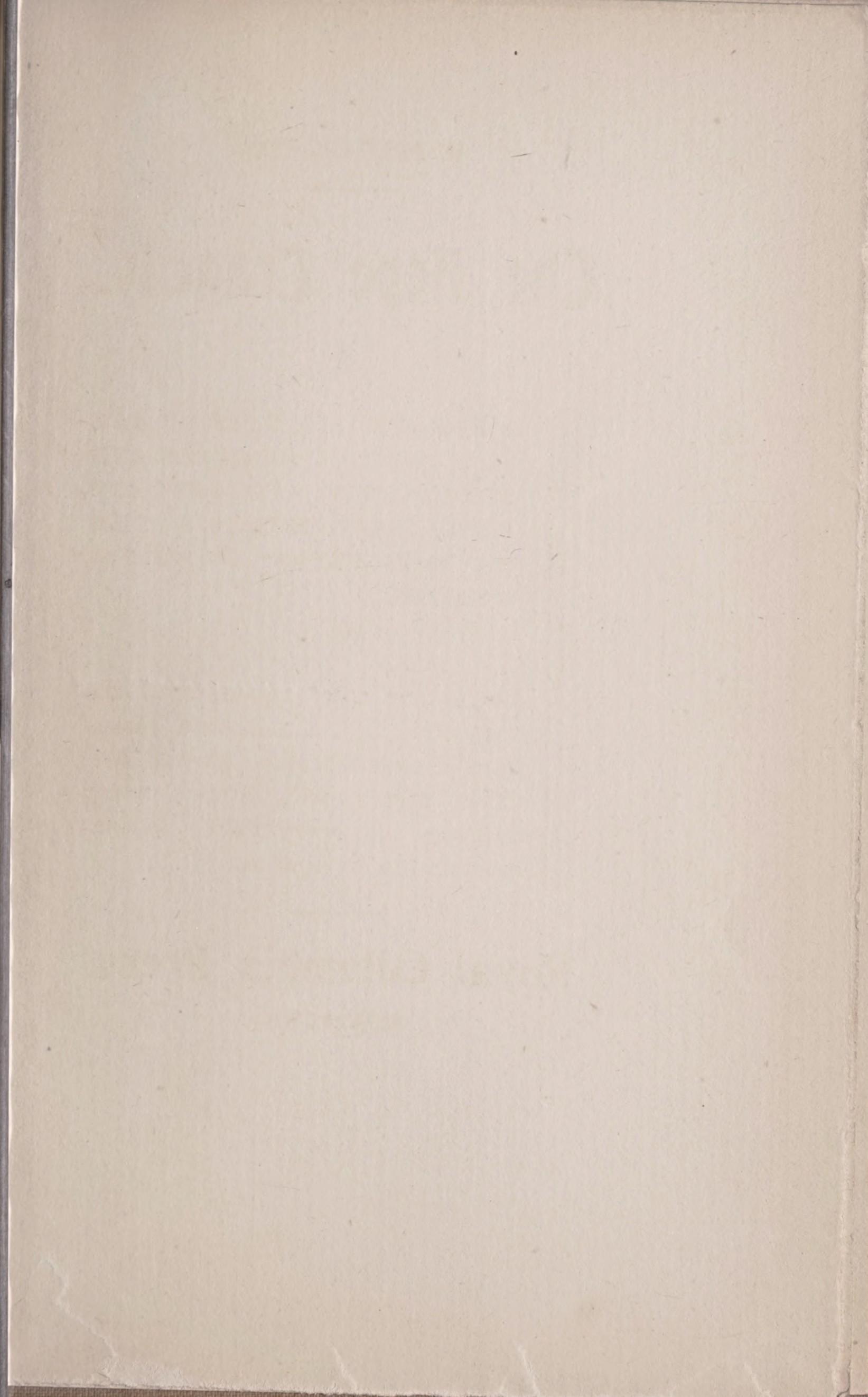
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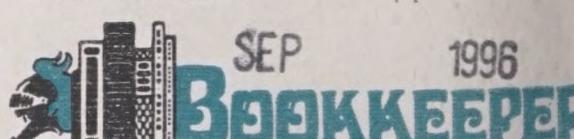




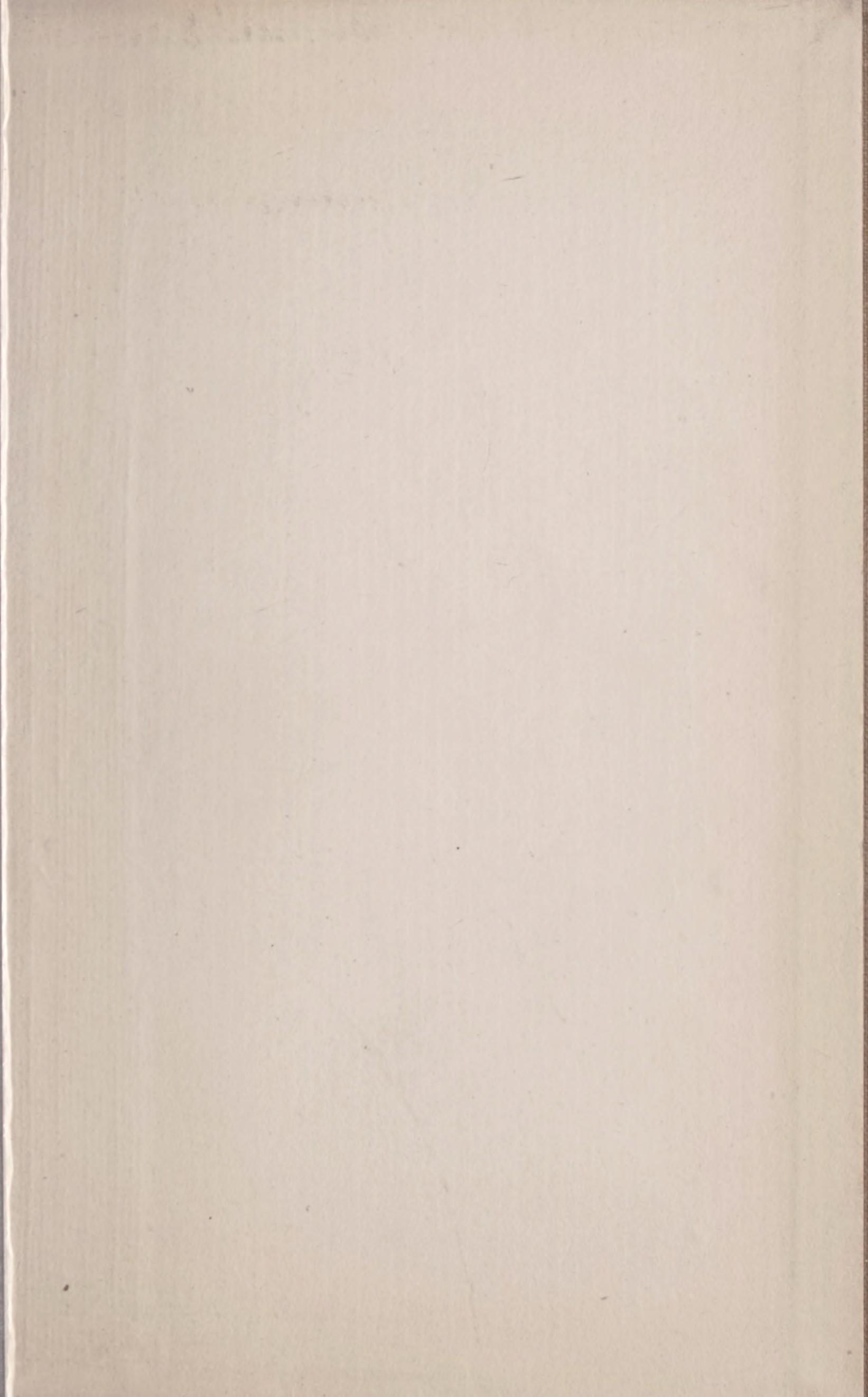
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